

Chili peppers are among nature's most wondrous creations, small, high-nutrition packets of addictive fire and flavor.
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Autumn is the golden season in the valleys nearby. Horse riding is the most popular entertainment.
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As a child, Ma Yue was timid, clever and sensible.
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By Yuan Li / Li Xiangquan /
Hu Jinxi / Miao Yajie

Members of China's last surviving hunting tribe began moving from their homes in Inner Mongolia's Xing'an Mountains last Saturday to the rural outskirts of Genhe, the administrative center of the region.

Eleven Ewenki families, 37 people in total, became the first group to settle in brand new houses built specially for them in Genhe, according to a local official, on Sunday.

On Monday morning, reporters saw only one family was living in the new houses. "No other family are living here," a security guard of the community told reporters.

Changing ways

Eighty-two year old Maria Suo would not make eye contact with the reporters who had come to cover the relocation of the Ewenki. She believed that all the strangers who had suddenly descended on the town were there to try to persuade her to leave her home.

Her son He Yingjun, who has been to college and settled down in Genhe long ago, told the media that the reason his mother does not want to move is simple: she does not want to leave the place she calls home.

Maria Suo's home is halfway up the mountain. Outside, her two granddaughters were sitting on the swings. There was a contented smile on her face as she watched them play.

He Yingjun said that many of the Ewenki felt reluctant to leave. They are accustomed to life in the forest, surrounded by their reindeer. "They are even used to the flies and mosquitoes in the summer time, that are as numerous as the leaves on the trees."

It was noon, and the horseflies were out in force. Maria Suo lit several piles of leaves and stalks, as an insect repellant for the reindeer, a number of which emerged from the forest on smelling the smoke, and began milling about the tent.

According to He Yingjun, interaction with the reindeer was an indispensable part of his mother's daily life.

Another elderly woman, who also remained silent, was named Laoba. In 1981, Laoba's daughter, Liuba, was accepted into the Central Academy of Fine Arts. She was the first of her community ever to attend college, and the first to go to live in a big city. After graduation, she went to work at a fine arts press at Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia.

However unable to adjust to city life, she eventually quit her job and returned to live in Aoluguya. She began drinking, at first a little, later heavily. In August last year, she got drunk one day and drowned.

It was this tragedy that started Damana, another member of the community and the representative of the Municipal People's Congress, thinking long and hard about the future of her fellow tribe members. The next generation should not live like their parents, they should enjoy modern life, she decided. Damana, and a like-minded friend went to speak to the town head, to ask that something be done to help her people.

Farewell to arms

The local government, meanwhile, had also been considering the future of the Ewenki hunters. Living deep in the forest, their children were out of reach of education facilities and they had no access to medical care.

Damana's elder son often went alone with his gun into the forest to try to bring some meat back to the table, but as often as not, he would return empty handed. The forest covering the Xing'an Mountains became smaller year by year. The wild animals became fewer, as the number of poachers grew. In winter, the valley froze, and breaking ice for water was a daily routine. After breaking the ice, they had to walk miles

Be It Ever So Humble...

in the mountain to get back to their tent.

Fifty-year-old Arong told reporters that he was the first to agree with the relocation project. Before moving, he had no opportunity to see his new home in Genhe, but he packed all his belongs, including his tent, the iron stove and chimney, thinking that sooner or later, he would need to use them again.

On Tuesday at the new community, the simply-decorated houses were all empty, except for No. 47 - Arong's. The only furniture were a fold-up bed, a table and two old benches. Asked how he felt about his new home, Arong said his living condition was better than that on the mountain, yet his 20 reindeer had gone without food for two straight days. The township government was organizing people to cut grass and tender tree leaves for feed, but reindeer do not eat grass, they eat a type of lichen known as reindeer moss, and the leaves were only enough to feed the two adult reindeer.

"We can no longer sit on the ground as we wish, we can no longer make bonfires as we are used to, the reindeer no longer walk easily around us. Opening the front door, we can no longer see the forest, all the familiar scenes have changed. Perhaps we will have televisions, or telephones, so what?"

Niurika, who is now in her second year of college.



The government was reportedly preparing to provide feed to the hunters for their reindeer. Yet Du Jing asked, "The reindeers are used to living in the wild on lichen, now they are caged and fed food they are unaccustomed to eating, can they survive?"

Maria Suo's son-in-law made a rough calculation for the reporters. In recent years the price for reindeer antlers has been falling. The annual income from one reindeer is around 200 yuan. When they were raised in the wild, there were virtually no extra expenses, and they also had time to go hunting. Income from hunting was around 1,000 yuan per year.

But according to the regulation, when they move away from their mountain home, they have to hand in their guns, which means they lose that 1,000 of annual income. Meanwhile, raising

reindeers in pens may cost them over a thousand per year. For families with no other income, it might prove beyond their means to continue raising reindeer.

Some hunters were reportedly considering handing their reindeer over to the government, in return for a living allowance. However for most of the Ewenki, reindeer are the only real assets they possess, surrendering them would require quite a leap of faith.

New lifestyles

The youngsters seemed mostly oblivious to the worries of the older members of the community, with the traditional lifestyle not yet engraved on their minds.

Twenty-year-old Niurika is sophomore in college. Since high school, she has come to her grandma's place on the mountain every vacation. "I've accumulated many

photographs," she told reporters, "I hope someday they will help outsiders to understand the culture of the Ewenki hunters."

She said it was not that her grandma did not want to leave the forest. It would be better for the young generation to grow up where they had access to a better education, however, leaving behind everything they knew was not an easy decision to make.

The red roofs and windows of the new houses in Genhe look very beautiful, yet the 200 kilometers separating them from Aoluguya represents a much longer journey, in terms of changing the lifestyle and way of thinking of this small group of people.

Photo by Hu Jinxi

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The Ewenki, sometimes known as Evenki, or Tungus, live in the far north-east of China, in Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang Province. One of China's 55 minority nationalities, they number around 26,000 in total population.

Most live in agriculture-based communities, or raise livestock, but one tribe, the Yahute, make their living by hunting in the dense forests of the Greater Xing'an Mountains and raising reindeer.

The once-nomadic tribe migrated south from the Ergun River on the Sino-Russian border and settled in and around the town of Aoluguya in 1965. There are about 500 people living in the town, 230 of them Ewenkis.

Chinese Ports Open to Foreign Capital

By Hou Mingxin

An American firm has recently made waves by signing a contract with Lianyungang port in eastern China's Jiangsu Province to purchase a 51 percent share in the port's Xugou project. The move followed a legal change allowing foreign firms to hold controlling stakes in domestic ports, the Xinhua News Agency-run *Economic Information Daily* reported last Tuesday.

The Investment Guidance for Foreign Capital recently issued by the State Council overrules previous regulations limiting foreign partners to less than 50 percent shares in Chinese ports, sources from the

Ministry of Communications (MOC) said last Thursday.

The remaining 49 percent stake in the Xugou project is held by Lianyungang Port Group and two other Chinese companies.

The policy shift is expected to open a new tide of investment in China's ports, Wang Jinwen, director of ports administration of the shipping department under the MOC, told *Beijing Today* last Thursday.

Before US United Yield International Ltd. made its historic purchase, two international shipping giants, A.P. Moller Maersk Group of Denmark and P&O of Britain, made a joint investment in the port

of Qingdao in Shandong Province last month.

According to Wang, ports were the earliest area of national infrastructure construction open to overseas investment, drawing foreign funds as early as 1979, and have continued to be point of government focus in seeking foreign financial support.

He added that with China's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and expansion of its opening policy, the Chinese government has realized that overseas investment can both help speed port construction and expand the capacity of domestic ports.

Currently, over 90 percent of China's foreign trade and half of the country's internal goods transport goes through domestic ports. The number of containers handled by Chinese ports has maintained an annual growth rate of 30 percent over the past decade.

China has already invested more than 100 billion yuan (\$12 billion) in ports and inland waters, according to Wang.

The Chinese government will issue several more regulations concerning overseas investment in Chinese ports in order to ensure the sound use of foreign capital in port construction and operation.

Possible Export Rebate Cut Proves Controversial

By Zhao Hongyi

In the past week, the domestic media has widely reported that the State Council is considering cutting export rebates for domestic companies from 15 to 11 percent at the beginning of next year. The expected move has become a subject of fierce debate between the government, enterprises and Chinese policy researchers.

Export rebates are common tools for encouraging export growth used all over the world. Before the Asian Financial Crisis, China offered average export rebates of 9.3 percent and increased that rate to 15 percent in early 1998 to help maintain domestic export volume. However, most Chinese exporters have never actually received their rebates in cash because the central government does not have sufficient funds for such payments.

By the end of 2002, total unpaid rebates spiraled to 247.7 billion yuan and are expected to exceed 300 billion yuan this year.

Supporters of the rebate cut, mainly government officials, argue the move will help the central government offset some pressure being put on China from the US and Japan to reevaluate the Renminbi, reduce its budget strains and force Chinese companies, particularly state-owned enterprises, to better prepare for global competition.

Most entrepreneurs, however, disagree and simply want their money. Calls for cash are especially loud in Guangdong Province, where unpaid export rebates total approximately 20 billion yuan. Even state-owned enterprises are worried and argue the cut could hamper the competitiveness of Chinese products.

"This cut would put deadly pressure on our business," said an executive who requested anonymity from the China National Minerals and Metals Import and Export Corporation (Minmetals), a state-owned import and export agent, "because we rely on the rebate to stay afloat."

Agents like Minmetals used to make profits from the gap between domestic purchasing prices and sale prices on the world market. However, low market prices abroad have forced these trade agents to rely on lowered prices from local producers and policy benefits like the export rebates.

Li Yushi, senior researcher on domestic exports with the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, a think tank under the Ministry of Commerce, warned that while the rebate cut could have some positive impact, "in the long run, this policy could raise the costs of China's exports."

Long Guoqiang, deputy director general of the Development Research Center of the State Council, predicted the cut could seriously hamper the sustainability of China's export and GDP growth, and eventually reduce the government's tax income. "Constant adjustment of the export rebate could also have negative impact on the government's credit, which has already been damaged because of delayed payments," he added.



A Professor of forestry from Japan's Tohoku University instructs locals in growing saplings in Pingwang, Shanxi Province.

Photo by Jianrong

Japan Finances Forestation in Shanxi

By Jian Rong

Last Thursday, the 11th Observation Group for Sino-Japan Economic Cooperation Programs organized by the Japanese Embassy went to Datong, Shanxi Province to visit three major "benefit the people" projects in the area financed through Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy.

These projects are aimed at reforesting land north of Datong, an area long plagued by heavy drought, protecting the environment and improving local people's standard of living. They were launched in 1998 and have received nearly 700,000 yuan in ODA sponsorship funds.

The ODA has brought in financial support from the Japanese government and Japanese agricultural specialists have been directed to the area, according to Masahiko Yamada, First Secretary of Japanese Embassy, and Kunio Takami, director of Japa-

nese Green Earth Network, the organization that actually manages the project.

Among the beneficiaries of the projects is the town of Wucheng, which has become home to many new almond trees that protect local groundwater and topsoil and have helped boost the town's economy. Local farmer Ma Wenlong, 64, and his wife have planted nearly half a hectare of almond trees, the nuts of which brought in nearly 7,000 yuan for the family last year. Overall, the planting of almond trees has led the average income of Wucheng's 2,800 residents to increase from 350 yuan in 1997 to 800 yuan in last year.

Another project receiving ODA support is a two-hectare multifunctional nursery in Pingwang, 20 kilometers outside of Datong, that focuses on raising new types of tree saplings. Built in 1996 and managed by the Datong Agency of the Green Earth Network, the

center received 823,000 yuan in ODA funds in 1996.

The center is also home to the Experimental and Demonstration Plant for Waste Water Processing, another project financed by ODA with 770,000 yuan in 2001. Facing serious shortages of water supplies, the Datong government uses this small plant to popularize the concept and technology of irrigation with depurated waste water.

"ODA's financing has been dedicated to afforestation activities in Datong through the Green Earth Network for 12 years. These projects have achieved a lot in improving Datong's ecological environment as well as upgrading local people's living standard. They have also set an example for other areas with advanced ecological and technological concepts," said Chai Jingyun, deputy chairman of the Datong Labor Union, involved in the direction of ODA funds.

City to Launch Preferential Tax Policy for Sports Industry

By Hou Mingxin

In order to make Beijing a central city in the global sports arena, the municipal government is formulating a regulation on local sports development that will include a preferential tax policy for the sports industry, a spokesperson for the government announced at a press conference last Wednesday.

The regulation is expected to

push related local administrations to amend tax policies for the sports industry and encourage the development and introduction of new kinds of sports events, facilities and equipment through preferential tax treatment.

An official from the Market Department of the Beijing Sports Bureau told *Beijing Today* the preferential tax policy would only extend to enterprises within

Beijing municipality, but include foreign-funded and Sino-foreign joint-venture enterprises.

The regulation will also aim to encourage donations from the general public for the construction of sports facilities and outlets. Moreover, it will call for all levels of the local government to include sports development and facilities construction in their annual budgets.

Private Enterprises Get OK for Publication Wholesale

By James Liu

The State Press and Publications Administration announced on August 2 that starting next month, local private enterprises will be allowed to apply for the right to distribute publications nationwide.

The new rules will lift previous restrictions that only granted state-owned enterprises permission to operate in the domestic publications wholesale market, said Liu Bo, director

of the administration's distribution department. However, interested private enterprises are required to have at least 20 million yuan in registered capital and occupy over 1,000 square meters of office space.

China's book-retail market is mostly controlled by state-owned Xinhua Bookstore, while the China Post Bureau has a near monopoly on newspaper and magazine distribution. In Beijing, for example, 95 percent of newspaper

and magazine retail booths are controlled by the city's post office.

Retail sales of books, newspapers and magazines reached over 150 billion yuan (\$18.12 billion) in China in 2001, and nationwide publication sales volume grew by an average of 12 percent each year from 1996 to 2002.

Overseas capital and joint ventures companies will be allowed to enter the wholesale publications distribution field after December 2004.

Industrial Development Priorities to Shift

By Zhao Hongyi

The Beijing municipal government is shifting its industrial development priorities from IT to manufacturing sectors involving high technology such as electronics, pharmaceuticals and computerized machinery, the Beijing-based *Economic Observer* reported last Friday.

Following the popping of the IT bubble in the past few years, Beijing has had to redefine its position in China's economy and put new emphasis on the development of high-tech manufacturing of products such as automobiles, micro-electronics and pharmaceuticals, as well as developing fields including bioengineering.

"Beijing cannot survive if it positions itself only as a political and cultural center," said Mao Shoulong, professor of administrative management at Renmin University.

The capital has fallen far behind the Pearl River

delta and Yangtze River delta areas, which have seen unprecedented industrial manufacturing growth in the past decades, and is now scrambling for a leading economic position in northern China, according to Mao.

To solidify the shift, the local government is considering the creation of a new body that would focus on industrial development and promotion that should come into being by the end of the year.

Beijing Vice Mayor Lu Hao was quoted in the *Economic Observer* report as saying, "Capital, new technologies, and intelligence are three critical elements Beijing badly needs."

He emphasized that Beijing has a complete traditional industrial base and a high quality workforce. "What we need to do is to transform traditional industries from the planned economy era into modern and market-oriented manufacturing industries," Lu said.

BDA Promises Profits to Infrastructure Investors

By Zhao Hongyi

The Beijing Economic Technological Development Area (BDA) is seeking investment from individuals from China and overseas towards the construction of roads, parking lots and other public venues and infrastructure facilities.

The zone stands at the southeast corner of the new Fifth Ring Road and its area will expand from the original 15.8 square kilometers to 39.8 by the end of this year. Basic infrastructure such as new roads, bridges, electricity, gas, water and heating supply and sewage treatment facilities are badly needed to support the growth.

"We have received inquiries from a dozen interested investors like China Unicom, most of

which are interested in the telecommunications facilities, used water treatment, sewage treatment, and public transportation facilities," Wang Hesheng, director of development research and legal affairs for the BDA, told *Beijing Today*.

The zone has received outside investment in its infrastructure in the past, such as when US-based Golden State Engineering & Technology Co. built and began operating a sewage treatment plant in the area in 2000.

Wang added that the zone's development committee would apply to the municipal government for tax exemption for investors like Golden State. "Our purpose is to guarantee profits for outside investors," he said.

Travel to Hong Kong, Macao Made Easier

By Guo Yuandan

As of September 1, residents of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhuhai in Guangdong Province will be allowed to apply for individual travel visas to Hong Kong and Macao, Minister of Public Security Bai Jingfu announced last Thursday.

The five cities are the second group to enjoy such privilege. Residents of another four cities in Guangdong, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan and Jiangmen, have been allowed to apply for the visas since July 28.

The policy change negates previous restrictions that only allowed

residents of these cities to visit Hong Kong and Macao in groups. Applicants for the visas need only provide their identification cards and *hukou*, or household registration.

Two trips to Hong Kong or Macao are permissible under the three-month visas. Visa holders can stay in the two special administrative regions for up to seven days each visit.

The new policy is one of the results of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangements, or CEPA, signed by Hong Kong authorities and the Chinese mainland government last month.

Government Paves Way for Private Waste Treatment

By Hou Mingxin

The municipal government has announced it will not continue to invest in local sewage disposal, leaving that industry in the hands of market-oriented enterprises. Following the issuance of the relevant policy in late July, Beijing Water Company, Ltd., a joint venture firm, was set up on August 2, the *Beijing Evening News* reported last week.

Beijing Drainage Group holds a 51 percent stake in the new com-

pany, which has a total of 4.02 billion yuan in registered capital, with the remaining share held by Beijing Capital Company, Ltd.

Between this year and 2008, the company plans to spend 2 billion yuan annually in treating and disposing of the capital's sewage.

The enterprise's plans call for the establishment of nine sewage treatment plants, bringing the total number in Beijing to 16 by 2008.



Internet Company Walks Acquisition Tightrope

By Zhao Hongyi

Days after China's three major commercial portals, sina.com, sohu.com and netease.com, successfully issued private convertible bonds that collected nearly \$3 billion in July, local media started speculating that the three portals planned to acquire local commercial websites with sustainable growth potential. The top choice of such companies was said to be local internet company 3721.com.

Established in 1998 by Zhou Hongyi and his wife Hu Huan, 3721.com operates a Chinese character search engine. The service was initially available only to government departments, but

quickly became available to the public, and achieved rapid success.

However recently, 3721.com has been losing market share to Google's Chinese service and another local search engine, baidu.com.

At the beginning of 2003, media reports speculated that Zhou was going to sell 3721.com. This week, new rumors say International Digital Group will withdraw its \$3 million seed investment in 3721.com. Last week, the three portals each declared they had no interest in acquiring 3721.com.

However according to marketing manager Zhao Tanbin, 3721.com was the first

Chinese website to generate a profit, in the second half of 2001. This week, it introduced a new system enabling customers to register and use Chinese character email addresses, rather than English ones.

"We know the critical point is to introduce new services and products," said Zhao, who also admitted that the company had long been preparing for a public listing, possibly in Hong Kong or Singapore. Her colleague, a Ms. Xue from the company's legal office, confirmed this.

Market observers believe a public listing will dramatically increase the value of 3721.com, to the point of pricing it out of the market.

CITIC to Manage National Olympic Stadium

By James Liu

A consortium led by the China International Trust and Investment Corp (CITIC) won an ownership tender last Saturday for the National Stadium, the main stadium for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Construction of the stadium will start on December 24 this year and is scheduled for completion in 2006. The project company will acquire a 30-year right to operate the National Stadium after the 2008 Games.

The consortium comprises of CITIC Group, Beijing Urban Construction Group, Golden State Holdings Group of the United States, and CITIC Group affiliate Guoan Elstrong. It will raise funding for 42 percent of the stadium's 3.5 billion-yuan (US \$423 million) cost. The remaining 58 percent, funded by the Beijing municipal government, has been entrusted to the Beijing State-owned Assets Management Company as the city government's representative.

According to the agreements signed between CITIC and the Beijing Municipal Government, the consortium and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) should set up a joint company with Beijing State-owned Assets Management to be responsible for funding, designing, construction and operation of the National Stadium.

The bidding process, overseen by the Supervisory Committee for the XXIX Olympiad, lasted for nine months.

Liu Jingmin, vice-mayor of Beijing and vice-chairman of BOCOG, commented at last Saturday's signing ceremony that



the outcome represented "good progress in the reform of Beijing's investment and financing system."

The Beijing municipal government has decided to make the financing of the Games market-oriented through ownership tenders in an attempt to give full play to investment and the post-Games utilization of the facilities, according to sources with the Beijing Development Planning Commission, which organized the bidding.

Bidding is currently underway for another seven Olympic venues and facilities, including the Olympic Village, the National Swimming Center and the Wukesong Cultural and Sports Center. The tenders will be allocated by October, said Liu Zhi, the commission's deputy director.

Hainan Island Relaxes Air Traffic Controls

By James Liu

Meilan Airport in Haikou, capital of south China's Hainan Province, and Fenghuang Airport in Sanya, on the southwest tip of the island, were approved by the General Administration of Civil Aviation on August 7 as international airports to open the third, fourth, and fifth air traffic rights to foreign carriers. Since then, foreign aircraft have been permitted to arrive and depart from Hainan Island, a move that is helping Chinese aviation companies gain access to the international market.

Opening the third, fourth, and fifth air traffic rights to foreign carriers means passengers and goods can be transported freely from the originating airport to the destination airport or to a stopover enroute to another destination. Thus the quantity of passengers and goods, aircraft types and traffic volume does not follow the reciprocity system, which stresses equal traffic volume between countries.

Microsoft China Names New CEO

By James Liu

Microsoft Corporation named Tim Chen (Chen Yongzheng) CEO and vice president of Microsoft China on August 11. Chen, the former chairman and president of Motorola China, will supervise Microsoft's operations in China's mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The former president of Microsoft China, Huang Cunyi, has been moved to the position of regional marketing director, and will report to Chen when he assumes his new post

on September 1. Tang Jun, sales and marketing president of Microsoft China, retains his post and will report directly to the new CEO.

Also on Monday, Motorola China announced the appointment of Gene Delaney as chairman of the board.



Starbucks Sues Shanghai Namesake

By James Liu

US cafe chain Starbucks International is involved in legal action against a Shanghai based cafe chain operating under the name Shanghai Xingbake, the Chinese transliteration of Starbucks.

Shanghai Xingbake Cafe is accused of illegally copying Starbucks International's Chinese brand and trademark. Shanghai Xingbake uses a trade mark almost identical to the eye-catching green and white logo of Starbucks, which operates more than 4,000 branches world wide, the only difference being that the former includes the words "Shanghai Xingbake Cafe."

A Mr. Mao, who described himself

as the general manager of Shanghai Xingbake Cafe, but was reluctant to reveal his full name, told *Jiefang Daily* that his company entered the Shanghai market before Starbucks and registered Xingbake as its trademark.

Shanghai President company, which is acting as Starbucks International's agent, held negotiations with Mao earlier, but failed to reach a settlement. According to Mao, his company has no conflict with Starbucks, as his cafes serve made-to-order style food while Starbucks operates a fast food style business. "We are planning to open another 30 or so outlets in the following two years in the city's busiest areas," he added.

Construction Bank Launches QFII Trustee Service

By James Liu

Following the granting of a license to HSBC to enter the local stock market as a Qualified Financial Institutional Investor (QFII) on August 6, its trustee bank - China Construction Bank became the first Chinese bank to officially start QFII trustee

business.

China Construction Bank has established a department to handle trustee business and will apply for an investment quota from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange as a precursor to opening a Renminbi account for HSBC.

BASF to Move Regional HQ to Shanghai

By Hou Mingxin

BASF is to move its Asia Pacific regional headquarters to Shanghai and to increase investment in this area, regional general manager Dr. Karl-Heinz Böhning announced last Monday.

The firm will increase production capacity for synthetic tanning and dispersing agents from 4,000 to 14,000 tons per year in its Shanghai factory. Work has begun on installing a new production line and a new spray-drying tower used to manufacture products in powder form, and it is expected to be completed by the end of 2003, according to Böhning.

Quanjude, Huatian Set Up Catering Conglomerate

By James Liu

Peking Duck chain Quanjude will establish a joint-venture in the coming month with Beijing Guoyuan Investment and Huatian Food Group, which owns several dozen century old restaurant brands.

President of Quanjude Jiang Junxian told *Beijing Today* that the move represented a merger, not a takeover attempt by Huatian Food Group. "The new established Huatian Quanjude Company will supervise and manage the parent company of the 40 Huatian eateries. But those century old restaurants will retain their brands and their

specialties won't change," he added.

Zhu Yuling, general manager of Huatian, told *Beijing Today*, "The registered capital of the new company is 80 million yuan. Each party will put up one third of the capital." Quanjude and Guoyuan will purchase 34 and 32 percent of the company's property rights respectively.

Guoyuan Investment, established in 2000 with a registered capital of 30 million yuan, is a joint venture combining private capital with state owned capital, mainly engaged in risk capital management and banking investment.

China's Growth Competitiveness Rises

By Flora Zhao / Aray Chen

China's growth competitiveness has risen from 39th in the world to 33rd, according to the latest Competitiveness Report released by the Davos-based World Economic Forum, in conjunction with Harvard University.

The top-ranked economies in growth competitiveness are the United States and Finland.

The annual Global Competitiveness

Report is the leading authoritative publication on national competitiveness. The ranking identifies and compares impediments and supports for national competitiveness - both at the macro and micro levels of an economy. It uses a combination of publicly available data and privately conducted surveys conducted over 80 economies, and is therefore useful as a guide to developing relevant strategies to achieve sustained economic progress.



By James Liu

Wuzhi and Wenxian branches of China Unicom Henan branches were found selling CDMA LG-900 mobile phones with no serial numbers at low prices in July this year. The two branches also refused to provide invoices to customers who bought the phones.

Wenxian police found more than 50

handsets of this type at the China Unicom Wenxian branch, while Wuzhi police concluded that the local branch had sold 482 models of this type in the previous two months. An investigation found that the batch of phones had been illegally imported, but was unable to determine from where.

The two China Unicom branches started selling the LG-900 model in mid June at 400 yuan per handset, including 100 yuan worth of call charges. Other incentives included no monthly charges and free call receiving, attracting swarms of customers.

China Unicom has been seen as one of the companies that will help break China Telecom's monopoly in wireless communication since it started business in 1994. At the time of publication, the investigation was continuing and the local court had not reached a final decision.



Fears of US-China Trade Row Overshadows Relations

Washington, August 3 (AFP) - A massive trade gap and a weak yuan are sparking fears of a destabilizing US-China trade war, threatening a new spirit of cooperation between the White House and Beijing.

While Chinese and US political interests have coincided in recent years, especially since the September 11 terror attacks, diverging economic paths could spell trouble.

The US trade deficit with China bulged 50 percent in three years, to 103 billion dollars - about a quarter of the total US deficit - in 2002. So far in 2003, it is up another 27 percent from last year.

US manufacturers, crushed by a three-year slump in which they have laid off 2.7 million workers, say a vastly undervalued yuan is making US goods too costly for the Chinese and Chinese goods unfairly cheap here.

Demands on US President George

W. Bush's administration to take action are growing even as political relations warm.

Now the yuan, fixed at a rate of about 8.3 yuan to the dollar, is chilling the atmosphere.

China also presented a high-skilled, low-cost threat with regard to a growing number of products, much like Japan in the 1970s and 1980s.

The US Treasury Department was required to take action, starting with negotiations, against countries that intervene in foreign exchange to distort trade.

US Treasury Secretary John Snow said last month he welcomed signs that China may loosen the yuan-dollar peg, predicting that a freer Chinese currency would appreciate and ease entry of US goods.

The most likely outcome would be a mild appreciation of the yuan, but still far short of the estimated 40 percent undervaluation.

Analyst's Take:

The issue stems from the American domestic politics, and whether it will be resolved or not depends on its domestic politics as well.

China responsibility, China threat, China spy, China trade surplus, and now China currency revaluation... China has always been a target of US politicians, both Democrats and Republicans.

China's trade surplus with the US is by no means the \$103 billion quoted by the US government, and most of the surplus is generated by US multinational companies operating in China.

Though the Republican administration clearly acknowledges this point, the American public does not, and Democrats prefer to use this figure to prevent the Bush administration from serving a second term in the White House.

The problem is that Bush administration could raise the issue again in its pres-

idential campaign next year to attract votes from the grassroots. In this case, China will have to take steps before then, symbolically at least, to ease the pressure.

— **Chen Baoshen, senior researcher, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**

Fortunately, we have plenty of means to solve the problem, for example establishing free fluctuation, enlarging the fluctuation range of the Renminbi, reducing trade rebates, increasing imports, increasing access to foreign currencies by Chinese individuals and ventures...

The People's Bank of China, China's central bank, has repeatedly stressed that China has no intention of destabilizing the Renminbi. Therefore, free fluctuation is impossible. A wider fluctuation range of the Renminbi is now expected, in addition to other supplementary measures.

— **Ma Yu, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation**

It's Bargaining Time Again

Free markets are common in the Nordic countries, particularly in the summer.

Fins in Helsinki, capital of Finland, prefer to gather at the free second-hand markets in front of their Presidential Palace facing Helsinki Bay.

The markets offer a place to chat with friends and neighbors who rarely meet during the eight cold months of winter.

Xinhua Photo



Reuters Back in Profit after Heavy Cost Cuts

London, July 23 (AFP) - News and financial information provider Reuters has beaten expectations with a return to profit for the first six months of the year.

But the group also reported a 10% fall in subscription revenues and narrowed its forecast for 2003 as a whole, estimating core subscriptions would fall by 11% in the year.

This has prompted suggestions that the group is only making profits because of sharp cuts.

Reuters has had to cut costs significantly in the past year to compensate for dwindling spending by its core customers - banks, fund managers and brokerages - as they themselves struggle with the prolonged stock market downturn.

The company announced in April that it was cutting 3,000 jobs over the next three years, after revealing its first loss since it became a listed company in 1984.

Reuters said conditions remained difficult, but that it had launched a range of new financial products and won two new contracts with leading investment banks Goldman Sachs and Lehman Brothers.

Goldman Sachs currently

uses products from both Reuters and its rival Bloomberg, with whom it is engaged in fierce competition. Last month, Reuters announced it was suing Bloomberg for patent infringement.

Media Reports:

New and strong competitors such as Bloomberg and Dow Jones, who are smarter and more flexible in market exploration, are the major reason behind Reuters' falling market shares.

Overall global economic depression forces customers to withdraw from Reuters' high priced products and services.

The Internet and the rapid development of print media are the two vehicles which propelled Reuters' rivals to success. Fortunately, Reuters has realized this, and is now transferring almost all business online.

Reuters began its recovery during the first half of the year, but still has a long way to go. Heavy cost cuts could hamper the quality of Reuters' products and services. The Internet may be powerful, but relying too strongly on a single vehicle makes your market position fragile.

— **Hong Kong Commercial Daily, August 9, 2003**

FBI Changing Counter-intelligence Tactics

Washington, August 3 (AP) - Even as it concentrates on preventing terrorism, the FBI is overhauling its counterintelligence efforts to blunt the threat. Agents are less focused on finding spies among diplomats and embassies - hallmarks of the long Cold War with the Soviet Union - and more interested in espionage directed at corporations, research centers and universities.

In fact, the FBI believes more foreign spies than ever are operating in the United States.

For instance, the FBI believes China has more than 3,000 "front" companies in the United States whose real purpose is to direct espionage efforts. Many of the thousands of Chinese visitors, students and business people who come to this country each year also have a government intelligence task to perform, authorities say.

The FBI ranks China as the greatest espionage threat to the United States in the next 10 years to 15 years.

"They figured out that what they want is throughout the United States, not just embassies, not just consulates," David Szady, FBI assistant director for counterintelligence, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It's a major effort."

China is not alone. Russia remains an espionage power, and the United States also must be vigilant against adversaries such as Iran and North Korea. Friendly partners such as Taiwan and India also pose a threat.

There are 40,000 foreign diplomatic officials in the United States, some of whom are intelligence officers. Saudi Arabia alone has 900 officials in this country.

Modern espionage can range from finding

out where an aerospace company produces gyroscopes for satellites to socializing with a US nuclear research scientist in hopes of gaining scraps of knowledge. In one recent case, adhesive maker Avery Denison estimated a \$50 million loss after a spy sold company secrets to a Taiwanese conglomerate.

To meet this challenge, the FBI has transferred 167 agents into counterintelligence and set up an anti-espionage operation for the first time in all 56 field offices. Each is putting together a comprehensive survey of the potential espionage targets in their domain to give the FBI its first broad national picture.

(Curt Anderson)

Analyst's Take:

Sun Dewei, spokesman, Chinese Embassy in Washington:

The FBI's charges are groundless. By the end of 2002, only 681 Chinese companies registered and operated in the US. How and where can it be that within half a year 3,000 Chinese companies emerged and are involved in espionage affairs?

Zhou Qun, secretary general, China-US Chamber of Commerce, New York:

Only a dozen Chinese companies are operating in New York, and nearly all of them are reps offices of large state-owned enterprises. They are still in the very beginning stage of their business, and their staff is busy all day long. Even after spending three to four years here, most have only a partial image of New York and the US before they must finish their terms and are sent back to China. It is really ridiculous to say they are conducting espionage operations in the free land of the United States.

Fed Holds Rates at 1%

New York, August 13 (Investors' Business Daily) - The Federal Reserve left its target rate unchanged at 1% Tuesday and indicated it has no intention of raising it soon.

Though it deemed deflation a "minor" risk, the Fed's policy statement noted the probability that "an unwelcome fall in inflation exceeds that of a rise in inflation."

On June 25, the Fed's wording was slightly different, citing a minor risk of "an unwelcome substantial fall in inflation."

Perhaps most important for stock and bond markets, the central bank expects to keep rates low for a "considerable period."

(Christina Wise)



Patrick Kron, President of Alstom AFP Photo

France Steps Up to Pull Alstom Back from the Brink

Paris, August 6 (AFP) - The French state helped engineer a multi-billion-euro rescue of the industrial group Alstom that should protect up to 75,000 jobs in Europe, but the EU vowed to give the plan careful scrutiny.

French Economy and Finance Minister Francis Mer said he believed there were grounds for an agreement with the European Commission in Brussels, which is charged with preventing illegal state aid.

Alstom, the builder of France's high-speed TGV trains, presented a raft of measures to relieve its debt crisis as part of a 2.8-billion-euro (3.2-billion-dollar) package that included a 600-million-euro capital increase to be submitted for approval by shareholders.



AFP Photo

AOL Time Warner Says May Drop AOL from Name

New York, August 11 (AFP) - Media giant AOL Time Warner said it may drop the "AOL" from its name, drawing a line under one of the media world's most troubled mergers, two and a half years after America Online's stunning takeover of the Time Warner empire.

Sources familiar with the matter said the name change could be on the agenda for AOL Time Warner's next board meeting in September, but it was too early to be sure.



Indians demonstrate against Coca-Cola and Pepsi in Calcutta. AFP Photo

Coca-Cola, Pepsi Deny Selling Pesticide-laced Soft Drinks

New Delhi, August 6 (AFP) - Soft drinks sold in India by Coca-Cola and rival Pepsi have "dangerously high" levels of pesticides, an independent environment watchdog said - a claim vehemently denied by the US beverage giants.

However, in a rare show of solidarity, competitors Coca-Cola and Pepsi closed ranks to hold a joint press conference where they threatened legal action against the environment watchdog for making "absolutely wild allegations."

"We are selling world class products in the Indian market and we have no double standards. There is no difference in the quality of a bottle of cola sold here and the US," said Sanjeev Gupta, the chief of Coca-Cola's Indian operations.

Rescue Call for Rare Books

By Hans Leu

Beijing bookworms are being asked to contribute to efforts to restore the most valuable collections of the National Library of China.

Ren Jiyu, curator of the National Library of China, initiated efforts to rescue many old books last Thursday.

Among the works to be saved are 50 rare old books, mostly from the collections of the National Library's Dunhuang and

Turpan Materials Center.

According to Ren, "This activity is not only aimed at raising funds, but also at strengthening public awareness of the need for cultural heritage protection."

Response has been rapid, as enough donations to restore 19 of the marked books came in on the first day of the campaign.

"We must preserve old books for future reference. It is the responsibility of the readers of today to protect books for readers

of tomorrow," says Ren.

Among the successes of the library's recent rescue efforts is the completed restoration of the *Yongle Encyclopedia*, the most renowned encyclopedia in Chinese history.

The Chinese government has long provided funding for the restoration of ancient tomes, but with hundreds of thousands of books in desperate need of repair, the public is being asked to come to their rescue.

"Starting this year, the National Library will publish an annual book list that will contain the specific funding needed for the protection and repair of all the ancient books," said Chen Li, deputy curator at the library.

Prospective donors can contact the library directly or through local branches of the China Industrial and Commercial Bank. Donations can range from a minimum of 92 yuan up to 10,000 yuan.

The Foxes and the Grapes

By Su Wei / Hu Rong

Four migrant workers from Henan Province have been held in detention by the Beijing Public Security Bureau, Haidian Branch since last Thursday for helping themselves to some special grapes. Little did they know that stealing the fruit would also land them in the headlines of local papers this week.

The media attention is a result of the fact that the stolen grapes were experimental fruits being grown under a research project of the Forestry and Fruit Institute under the Beijing Academy of Agri-Forestry Sciences, in which 400,000 yuan has been invested since 1993. According to the police report, the fruit filchers said if they had known

the grapes were rare, they would not have eaten them.

Before the crime, the four men had been working at a construction site at the foot of the Fragrant Hills. "Last Wednesday night, we wanted some fruit, so I proposed we go to the nearby China Forestry Fruit Trees Research Institute. I once worked there for a while and knew they grew some delicious fruit," said Li Gaoshang, one of the four detainees, as quoted in the police report.

They walked for an hour, arriving at the institute at 11 pm and then scaled its outer wall. "I led them directly to the grape growing area and we dug in," recalled Li. "When we were full and ready to leave, we thought it would be

a shame if we did not take some back." Li then found a woven bag in a nearby garbage can and began filling it with grapes.

On their way back home, they were stopped by officers from the Fragrant Hills Police Station and questioned on the contents of the bag. When the men answered honestly that it was full of grapes, they were taken back to the station and later told the police exactly what had transpired.

Xu Haiying, manager of the grape development project, said the men destroyed 20 of the 110 grape vines involved. "These grapes are used for culturing grape seeds, and we keep records for each vine and conduct periodical comparison tests," she said. "We planned to promote the development of new

types of grapes after they passed expert review in September."

While she did not clearly say how much she thinks the four men should offer in compensation, Xu did state that, "Several hundred yuan would not make up for our losses, which represent intangible mental work."

She continued, "However, it is unreasonable and unnecessary to expect them to put up the full 400,000 yuan that was invested in the project, because they did not destroy all the grapes and cannot afford to pay that much."

The Fragrant Hills police have stated they would not be able to make a decision regarding the four men until the institute has provided a clear estimate of the losses incurred in the incident.

Baby to Lose Dangerous "Third Leg"

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Thanks to widespread media coverage, a local one-year-old baby born with an extra appendage that looks like a third leg has become the subject of great public concern. Qingqing (pseudonym) will soon undergo a dangerous operation to have the extraneous limb removed.

The extra appendage starts from her buttocks and stretches upwards towards her head, making it difficult for Qingqing to keep balance. Moreover, the extra leg saps nutrition and energy from her other limbs and puts her at great risk of developing muscular dystrophy in her right leg.

Qingqing was discovered abandoned on a street in Beijing in March this year and has since been adopted by a local family.

Last Wednesday, doctors at Dongzhimen Hospital X-rayed the appendage and found its bone structure shows the presence of a pelvis and even a skull, indicating it is likely the remainder of a malformed Siamese twin.

According to Dr. Xu Lin, director of the hospital's orthopedic center, "Siamese twins are not infrequent in the world, but an extra limb with its own blood vessels and nerve system is definitely an unusual medical phenomenon."



A radiologist at Dongzhimen Hospital checks Qingqing's X-ray. Photo by Gloom

Foreigners Heavyweights After Chinese-Style Slimming

By Guo Yuandan

Four overweight foreigners seeking to shed pounds through treatment based on traditional Chinese medicine have become star patients at the Tianjin Aimin Fat Reduction Hospital over the past two weeks.

The first to arrive was Katou from Japan, who checked on August 2, followed by Louise from Italy, Lincoln from Scotland and Justin from Australia the next day. The hospital has not disclosed the four patients' full names.

Katou, host of a TV program in Japan and popularly known as "Fatty" in that country, is the heaviest of the four, weighing in at 265 kilograms, and hopes to lose 90 kilograms during one year at the hospital. The others all tip the scales at under 170 kilograms.

The Tianjin Aimin Fat Reduction Hospital is the only hospital in China that special-

izes in weight loss by means of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine and has opened clinics in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea. The hospital won a Guinness World Record in 2000 for helping Meng Qinggang lose 80 kilograms in 100 days, called the fastest massive weight loss ever in the world.

Hospital doctors have set regimens of acupuncture treatment augmented by regular exercise and strictly controlled diets for their international patients. By Monday, Katou had already lost 12 kilograms and the others also showed significant results.

To make life easier for the foreign patients, hospital cooks are providing them with specially-tailored Western food and they have an interpreter to help them interact with the Chinese doctors and staff.



Louise from Italy goes under the needle in hopes of losing weight at the Tianjin Aimin Fat Reduction Hospital.

Photo by Wang Guijiang

Never Too Old for Love

By Chen Ying

The story of elderly Ms. Chen of Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, is further evidence that love knows no boundaries of age or otherwise.

Chen, 91, participated in a party this January intended to find partners for single older people, drawing attention from not only the gentlemen present but also later from the local media. Since the event, Chen has received more than 80 love letters from eager suitors.

She was born in Hong Kong and worked there as a teacher before her family made a permanent move to Guangzhou after the Japanese invaded in the early 1940s.

Chen married and has eight children, 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Her husband died over 20 years ago, and her oldest daughter is 68-year-old. Though her family members have provided her with considerate care, she has expressed loneliness since she moved to a retirement home called Longevity Mountain last year.

That facility was the host of the mixer, intended to help its elderly residents find love again. Chen was



Chen holds up a letter from an American suitor.

Photo provided by Southern Metropolis Daily

the first to sign up, and on her request form indicated she was looking for an honest man who was literate and caring to others, ideally 10 years younger than her.

Unexpectedly, she has since received dozens of letters from suitors from as far away as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao and other countries that heard about her situation from Chinese media reports.

Out of respect, Chen has answered all the letters she has received, but has yet to find her soul mate. "Finding true love takes time. I won't regret this even if I don't find him, because at least I have tried," she told the Guangzhou-based newspaper *Southern Metropolis Daily* on July 7.

Karao-Cave Not OK

By Zhao Hongyi

Just when it seemed like the karaoke could spread no further in Beijing, as even visitors to Beihai Park are subjected to amplified caterwauling, speakers and mikes have shown up in a massive limestone cave in a southwestern suburb of the city.

The underground stage was set up earlier this year in the 5,000-meter-deep Yinhu Cave beneath Xiayingshui village in Fangshan District.

Local enterprise Yinhu Cave Natural Resources Management Corporation spent 200,000 yuan to bring in some small electric cars for driving through the caves and set up teahouse and karaoke club 50 meters below ground level. The new entertainment site has attracted large inflows of tourists from Beijing.

Scientists, however, warn that sending

swarms of visitors into over-developed natural areas can be dangerous. Jiang Yiping, senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "Caves and their internal formations are very fragile."

He went on to condemn both the developers of the Yinhu cave for going too far and local media for irresponsible coverage of the story, drawing more visitors to the site.

Jiang told *Beijing Today* that nearly 100 years ago, a cave in Sichuan Province collapsed while being used by local villagers as the venue for a large wedding banquet, burying hundreds of people, including the bride and groom.

A woman surnamed Sun from the corporation dismissed Jiang's concerns. "Our operations are going just fine. Don't worry."

Artistic Kids Invited to Celebrate Olympics

By Su Wei

The opening ceremony of the Third Visa Olympics of the Imagination (VOI) in China held Monday last week at the Great Hall of the People also marked the launch of the sixth VOI program, targeted at children aged nine to 13 worldwide.

Under the international art program, children from 20 countries will participate in a competition with the theme of "how the Olympic Games help create a better future." Entrants must express

their understanding of the Olympic movement through artistic merit, originality and imagination. Thirty winners, including two from China, will be selected and awarded trips to attend the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, along with one of their parents.

Local children interested in the competition should send their artwork to the Children's Palace (Shaonian Gong) near Guanyuan Bridge in Xicheng District before October 31.

Village Pays People to Learn

By Guo Yuandan

For the past three years, a policy set by the leaders of Beizai village on the outskirts of the capital has succeeded in encouraging educational achievement among the nuptial-minded.

According to the rules of the village, located in Qiaoxin town, Huairou District, when two senior middle school graduates marry, they can receive a 300 yuan award. Holders of bachelor's or master's degrees that tie the knot get more, topping out with a 10,000 yuan payment for married PhDs.

"This policy is intended to improve the quality of our villagers," Yao Jianrong, vice secretary of the Communist Party of Beizai village, explained to *Beijing Today* Monday. "In our village, most people have only finished middle school, so we have many quarrels and disputes and it is very difficult to manage village affairs."

The first couple to receive such awards was Xie Yun and Chen Siguo, married in 2000. To date, seven couples have received the financial bonuses.

The village also supports the education of people not yet ready for marriage by offering 500 yuan to anyone who enters college and 1,000 yuan to people who pursue advanced degrees.

Cultural Heritage (Off-)Sites

The Hangzhou government moves cultural heritage sites from their original locations

By Chen Ying

Three ancient bridges on the outskirts of Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, built during the Ming and Qing dynasties, will be relocated, as part of the Hangzhou West Lake Comprehensive Protection Project.

The local government's project to move the bridges in the name of protecting cultural heritage has provoked heated debate over the specific characteristics and conditions of cultural heritage protection.

According to reports by *Beijing Youth Daily*, the three bridges are being moved for different reasons.

Yuxiu Bridge has been located at Laohu Village in Xiaoshan District since the 9th year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty. Because the river way under the bridge will be filled and transformed into a road, the giant stones of the ancient bridge were disjointed and transported to Zhaogong embankment on July 28. The rest of the bridge will eventually be restored there.

Meanwhile, the material of the other Yujian and Yongfu Bridges will be transported from their original location in Tonglu County first to Wugui Pool, and finally to Xiamaojiabu.

Yujian Bridge, located in Fengshou Village in Tonglu County, was built in the middle of the Ming Dynasty. It is officially listed as one of China's protected cultural heritage sites. Its removal will prevent it from being submerged as a result of the Fenshuijiang Hydro-junction Project.

Yongfu Bridge, located in Shenfan Village in Tonglu County, was also built during the Ming Dynasty. The bridge is no longer in use by the locals, as part of it has been destroyed by flood, and new roads now run through the village.

Last year, five ancient constructions were already moved to the Southern Scenic Area of Hangzhou's West Lake. Three are ancient residences, from She County in Anhui Province and Chun'an County in Zhejiang Province, while the other two are the city's own Bao'en and Xinhenghe Bridges. Some believe that the Hangzhou government's removal projects contribute to making the relics more competitive in applying for World Cultural Heritage status.

A spokesman for the Hangzhou Cultural Relics and Gardens Bureau claims that there are a large number of ancient bridges throughout Zhejiang Province, many of which have long been abandoned. He says their removal helps the ancient bridges to survive in other sites, since they no longer serve their original role in their present location and are now being ignored. Relocation gives the bridges more cultural meaning by highlighting their historical value.

Meanwhile, over one hundred villagers attempted to prevent the removal of Yujian Bridge. Their reason? They were unsatisfied with government compensation, according to *Beijing Youth Daily*. Cynics suggest they are simply speculating on the economic value of the cultural heritage site, which attracts tourists to feed the local economy.

But many experts still worry about the inevitable and irreparable damage the removal will cause to the bridges, no matter how carefully planned. Others doubt whether relocation should be considered as a form of cultural heritage protection at all.

It's not an amusement park

Xu Pingfang, researcher at the Archeology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is highly opposed.

"Cultural heritage can't just be moved anywhere, especially when it is considered protected," he says. The national cultural heritage and relics law rules that protected cultural heritage can only be moved after strict inspection and sanction by all levels of government.

But Yang Xinping, vice-director of the Cultural Heritage Office of Zhejiang Province Cultural Heritage Bureau, insists that the office was in no way informed before the local government began to remove Yujian Bridge.

"The entire bridge will simply be restored to fake after its removal," said Xu. "This is a very unwise project. It just reveals the government's shallow understanding of cultural heritage protection. It's not for the sake of protecting cultural heritage, but for making money."

"I also don't believe these relocation projects will provide any advantage to Hangzhou's application for World Cultural Heritage status. Anhui's architectural style is obviously totally different from Zhejiang's. Even the styles of different cities within the same province are inconsistent."

Xu said he could understand reuniting all sorts of exciting and fascinating games and machines into a single amusement park. "But that's another business. Spending so much money to move these ancient buildings will never achieve the expected profits."



More than one hundred villagers attempted to prevent the removal of Yujian Bridge before it was disjointed on August 6.

That's why we call it "immovable heritage"

To better understand international regulations in protecting cultural heritage in similar cases, *Beijing Today* contacted Gustavo F. Araoz, Executive Director of the United States Committee, International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS).

Beijing Today (BT): Do you support the project to relocate the bridges?

Araoz: According to internationally accepted standards for heritage conservation, a monumental building or structure is inseparable from its site and its setting. That's why we call it "immovable heritage," unlike artifacts and objects, which are "movable heritage" with no fixed geographic locations. This is very clear in every set of standards, including the World Heritage Operational Guidelines, which require authenticity of material, design, craftsmanship and SETTING.

Occasionally, when there is simply no other recourse for saving a heritage building or structure, they may be moved (for example Abu Simbel in Egypt). But there is universal acceptance that in doing so, important characteristics are lost and the very value of the element is diminished forever. This would seem to be the case for Yujian Bridge, and of all the three cases, it seems to be the one whose move is best justified. But in reality, every effort should be made to not move a heritage structure — it all depends on how you define "every effort."

BT: What exactly is the relationship between an ancient structure of cultural heritage and its site?

Araoz: For the last 50 years, there has been strong consensus that the protection of a heritage building or structure is not only limited to the actual fabric of the building but also to its traditional and historic setting and all of the elements that make up that setting. The Eiffel Tower has to be in the



The giant stones of Yuxiu Bridge were transported to Zhaogong embankment on July 28.

Photos by Photocom

Champs de Mars in Paris, and not in New York or Hong Kong. Buildings are designed for a specific place, and become inseparable from it. In this sense, the protection of a historic bridge implies the protection of the historic river over which it was built, and of the path that leads to it and away from it. In this nature-culture union, the bridge, the river and the road are all inextricable and linked forever. By the way, I find the image of a river being filled in and turned into a road (Yuxiu) most disturbing.

The bridge at Yongfu is most unfortunate in that it is simply being moved out of neglect. Pathway and traffic patterns should not have been designed to let the bridge fall into obsolescence. Instead, new means to re-engage this historic bridge into the movement patterns of the local community should be examined and implemented. Give the bridge back its usefulness and its function.

BT: Have similar projects occurred in your country or in other places you know?

Araoz: I am embarrassed to say that yes, it happens far too often. Historic wooden, even masonry buildings are moved in one piece by these giant tractors across the street or across town. Other times buildings are disassembled and re-erected either in the same place or elsewhere. Always these things are associated with "progress," which means that someone wants to build a building or a road where the older building had laid its claim to geography.

It is not the right thing to do at all, but reason does not always prevail against economic interests — at least not in much of the capitalist world; and in the not-so-capitalist world, those decisions are similar, except that they are restricted to a smaller number of those in power. Cultural concerns are usually long-sighted with far horizons into the future. Economic ones have immediate and limited perspectives, but with more imminently felt effects in some people's pockets. That is why we allow it to pass.

BT: Sometimes the government must remove cultural buildings to pursue an ambitious large-scale project, such as China's Three Gorges Dam. Many cultural relics will be submerged once the Yangtze River rises to a fixed level. But among those saved so far is the Zhang Fei Temple, which was carefully relocated last year to Long'an Village in Panshi Town, just 32 kilometers upstream, where the natural environment is similar to its original site. What is your opinion on these projects?

Araoz: The problem with dams is very serious. You may recall the tragic drowning of the extraordinary Roman era mosaics last year in Zeugma, Turkey, where other dams are still being planned and will have similar effects. The Aswan dam is far into the past, but I was young when it was built and the controversy was also large. So you see, the three Gorges dam is just one more episode in this human tragedy of lost heritage. What makes it even sadder, is that we say heritage sites should be preserved forever. But we are giving them up for dams whose life span is limited. We are now seeing in the USA, a number of dams from the 1930s that are reaching the end of their useful life because they have silted up irreversibly, and now will have to be demolished. Dams are not forever, heritage is.

Readers & Leaders

A Testimony to Openness of Mind

By Shida Zhu

Sixty senior Chinese government officials will go to Cambridge, Massachusetts, for a seven-week-long study tour at the J.F. Kennedy School of Government. This is the second group in the five-year program to train Chinese senior officials in public administration, jointly organized by the State Council Development Research Center, Tsinghua University and the K School.

The program is designed to broaden the international horizons of Chinese officials and raise their ability in public administration in the wake of China's entry into the World Trade Organization. They will be specifically prepared to meet the many challenges of 21st century globalization.

Furthermore, the strategic decision to send senior Chinese officials to an Ivy League university to learn public administration demonstrates the determination of the new Chinese leaders to open China even more to the rest of the world. It is a question of openness and maturity, a matter vital to China's future.

They will learn the maturity of American ideas, expertise and experiences in public administration. The Americans' recent victories in coping with the SARS epidemic are an example of their sound public administration. They will learn to understand that government is service, not authoritarianism, as is the Chinese tradition. In modern society, an efficient, democratic and people-serving government is the guarantee for social stability and progress.

Practically, the most essential thing they will learn is the Harvard approach to problems, namely, what is stated by the university motto — *veritas*, or truth. When Hillary Clinton was asked whether anything embarrassing should be left out of the Bill Clinton Museum, she said, "No, it's history." Respect for history is respect for truth. As long as a government remains true to hard facts and history, rather than outdated books, it can begin to cope with difficulties and win the support of its people.

What struck me most from my personal experience at Harvard was its spirit of academic freedom and the clearly unobstructed flow of information. So many seminars and forums were held on all kinds of topics, from Islamism to literature in Iceland, at the Sanders Theatre, in Emerson Hall, or at the Unitary Church in Cambridge. Society at large was invited to participate in these forums, to raise questions and to argue opinions. Everyone respected individuality, individual ideas and inventions. Students formed all types of societies, such as the experimental drama club and the Dudley Hall choir. Student-run newspapers abounded. Personalities clashed and plunged into action in pursuit of science and truth, regardless of race, class, ethnicity or wealth.

Another strength of the K. School is its international outlook. During my stay, I attended a series of forums at the Arco Forum hosted by Bob Dole, Tom Wolfe, Michael Dell, senators, and other international leaders, proposing a wide range of talks on both national and international issues. This wealth of exposure is invaluable to all students with global aspirations, and to Chinese students in particular.

Essentially, the Chinese officials' education at Harvard will be an education in intellectual quality. They will learn to apply what they have studied academically at the K. School to their daily practices. They are not afraid of western ideas, they are prepared to face them squarely and critically and to assimilate what is useful to the effective government of China. It is this attitude that will benefit China's reform and further its efforts in opening up.

I was particularly impressed by the round-table talk between Tony Blair and students of Tsinghua University. He spoke to them as to close friends with a sincere heart, and later rounded up the session by singing the Beatles' "When I'm 64," accompanied by his wife. He is a model for the modern political leader, whether from West or East. I was moved when I witnessed China's new leaders shaking hands with nurses and ordinary citizens in the street during the most severe period of the SARS outbreak.

If people apply the true spirit of democracy, it will be a truly wonderful government — efficient, transparent and open, a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

The author is director of the department of American social and cultural studies at the Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and vice-president of the Harvard Beijing Club.

We welcome your letters and articles, preferably around 700 words. Please give your full name, current address and phone number (not necessarily for publication). You can email us at comment@ynet.com or fax us at (010) 6590 2525.

The views expressed in this column are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Beijing Today.

SOUND BITES

"No, sir."

— These were the only words spoken by basketball superstar Kobe Bryant during the seven-minute hearing in Colorado, US. He was not permitted to make a plea and spoke only to respond to the judge's question. He has denied raping the woman who worked as a concierge at a classy resort where he stayed in late June. The judge set October 9 as the date for a pre-trial hearing.

"God willing, I'll be back."

— Liberian President Charles Taylor,

as he resigned from office and flew into exile in Nigeria. In a long handover ceremony in the sweltering Executive Mansion, Taylor called himself the "sacrificial lamb" in Liberia's conflict. As three African heads of state looked on, Taylor implored the world to help his country. "It should be essential — exceptionally essential — that the international community help Liberia," he said. "Now you have no excuses."

"If it turns out that this incident came from the former Japanese Army,

then I think it is necessary that we handle the case accordingly."

— Mr. Fukuda, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, at a news conference in Beijing. At least 36 people in northeastern China have become ill after unearthing mustard gas that Chinese officials say was left behind by Japanese troops at the end of World War II. Two affected workers were "close to death."

"I invite all to join in my prayers for the victims of this calamity, and I exhort all to raise to the Lord fervent en-

treaties so that He may grant the relief of rain to the thirsty Earth."

— Pope John Paul II, addressing pilgrims and tourists in his prayer appeal at the papal palace in lakeside Castel Gandolfo, which is generally cooler than Rome. Drought-fed fires have plagued Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, France and arid areas of other countries. More than 40 deaths — including a 3-year-old French girl — have been blamed on temperatures that have hovered in the 100-degree Fahrenheit range for days.

By Jerry Ho

"When I told them I didn't have change, they would say the money wasn't that important, and that I could always pay them back next time. I was so happy at first, because I thought I was making a great sale. But then I realized that most of those big bills were fake."
— Wei Hua, small shop owner.

Fake the Money and Run

By Su Wei

Beijing has become a key national hub for the circulation of counterfeit currency," announced a recently released report on counterfeit currency nationwide by the Operations Department of the Bank of China.

Over 14,000 pieces of counterfeit currency, with a total value of some 1.15 million yuan, were identified by a commercial bank in Beijing during the first five months of this year, confirmed *Beijing Evening News* in July.

Sources from the Economic Crimes Investigation Department of the Beijing Public Security Bureau reveal that in the early 1990s, within five years more than 300 million yuan in counterfeit money had been imported to China by overseas counterfeiters.

"The number of counterfeit currency crimes committed in Beijing peaked in 2000 and 2001, ever since counterfeit 50- and 100-yuan notes began circulating in 1987," reported *Beijing Youth Daily* last month.

"As long as there is money, there is fake money," said Dong Qiang, deputy director of the Currency and Treasury Department of the People's Bank of China.

Creeping into the capital

As early as 2000 in a national campaign against counterfeit money, Beijing was listed alongside Guangdong, Zhejiang, Guangxi, Henan, Anhui, Shandong and Hebei as one of 16 high-risk provinces in the manufacturing and trafficking of counterfeit currency.

Dong recalls that in the first five months of 2000, over 1,800 counterfeit currency cases emerged throughout China, with over 200 million yuan in counterfeit currency confiscated and more than 2,300 suspects arrested. "Beijing was involved in quite a large percentage of these cases," he added.

In the past two years, Beijing police have detected a total of 428 counterfeit currency cases, involving 11 million yuan and 462 suspects.



Penny pinching

Officer Xie, of the Beijing Public Security Bureau, responsible for investigating such crimes, and who gave only his surname, remembers they once confiscated 8,000 counterfeit 1-yuan coins.

The Xiangheyuan Savings Office of the Industrial and Commercial Bank has also detected counterfeit 1-yuan coins on a few occasions in the past several months. The staff told *Beijing Today* that although the size, identification marks and Chinese characters of the fake coins were quite well forged, they were darker, heavier, and the sound they made when hitting the floor was duller.

Beijing police pointed out that while most international counterfeiters aim for the higher face values, counterfeited Chinese currencies of 10, 5, 2 and 1 yuan are becoming more and more common. According to the Beijing Banking Industry Association, these days, around 2 percent of counterfeit currency confiscated by Beijing banks are of low face value.

"To some degree, the circulation of low value currency makes people more aware of counterfeit money in general," said Xie. But the wider range of counterfeit currency involved also makes it more difficult for us to clean up the cash market in Beijing."

Overseas traffic

The Ministry of Public Security claims that some of the counterfeit currency infiltrating China's mainland originates from Taiwan and Hong Kong.

In a case investigated by

Guangzhou police in early 1990, thousands of the total 30 million yuan worth of counterfeit money flowing into the mainland were discovered to be made in Hong Kong. In another case, Fujian police confiscated over 12 million yuan in fake currency made in Taiwan. The Ministry of Public Security reported that in 1995, over 2 million counterfeit yuan confiscated by Chinese police came from Taiwan.

In early February 1996, the Supreme People's Court made the first public ruling by a Chinese mainland court sentencing Taiwanese people to death for the crime of counterfeiting currency. Five Taiwanese fishermen, Chen Qipeng, Xu Jinguang, Lü Yisheng, Su Huoming and Lin Dengfeng, were sentenced to death by the Guangdong Higher People's Court after trafficking 33 million yuan in counterfeit currency to Shanwei, in Guangdong Province.

Not made in Beijing

"So far, we haven't found any criminal counterfeiters based in Beijing," emphasized Dong Qiang. "The currency confiscated by the police has usually been trafficked from provinces in South China, such as Fujian and Guangdong, to those surrounding Beijing such as Inner Mongolia and Shanxi."

Xie notes that in most cases, whenever police in the coastal areas detect counterfeit currency, Beijing police are informed that some of it has penetrated Beijing. "The counterfeit money circuit clearly runs from south to north," he concluded.

In a more recent bust by the Beijing police in April 2000, sums of 6.26 million counterfeit yuan had been trafficked six times via Lufeng, Guangdong province, to Beijing. Over 7 million yuan was confiscated on the spot, and 20 people were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 6 to 15 months, in addition to being fined between 20,000 and 200,000 (genuine) yuan.

Xie claims most arrested counterfeit money dealers come from Henan, Shandong and Hebei provinces, and in particular "people from Xinyang and Hengchuan, in Henan."

According to Beijing police, most counterfeit criminals are peasants, former prisoners and unemployed workers, trying to "get rich quick."

Chen Guanyi, a Henan peasant who later became a triad chief in the counterfeit money racket, confessed to Beijing police that when he first came to Beijing in 1995, he sold vegetables, soft drinks and goldfish. "But I hardly made a living," he said. "After I met Huang Xiaomei, I bought 150,000 counterfeit yuan for just over 7,000 yuan, and then sold them at ten times their face value."

As for Huang Xiaomei, chief trafficker, she claims her own profit was twelvefold.

Mindless middle-men

In January 2002, another Henan man surnamed Zhang was finally released by the Beijing police. He admitted that the 200,000 counterfeit yuan he carried from Zhumadian, in Henan province,

was destined to be sold in Beijing. "I don't even know who my boss is, because he only gives orders by telephone. This time I was told that a man would meet me upon arrival," he explained.

Li Yugang, from Anhui province, was arrested on January 27 of this year by the Beijing Public Security Bureau's Fengtai Branch. Police found 130,000 yuan in counterfeit money in his bag at a long-distance bus station. He claims he ignored the contents of the bag: "One of the guys in Anhui asked me to deliver a bag to someone in exchange for several hundred yuan."

Wang Ziping, head of Criminal Case Investigation of the Beijing Public Security Bureau, West Railway Station Branch, says that since counterfeiting currency is usually an organized crime, the criminals usually adhere to a strictly organized system. "The distinct processes of manufacturing, trafficking and trading are executed separately by isolated individuals who never know who is on either side of each transaction," he said. "Times and locations of deals to be concluded keep changing up until the very last minute, so that the people pulling the strings can remain backstage, and cut them at any moment."

It could happen to you

Xie says daily consumer life is the main venue for criminals to contaminate the cash flow, "especially in paying for taxis, food and beverage, and both wholesale and small retail items."

Tian, a driver from Beifang Taxi Company, told *Beijing Today* that he once unknowingly collected two counterfeit fares in one night. "They usually say they don't have change and just hand me a 100-yuan note."

Xu Mancun, a retired worker in Haidian district, attempted to buy rice two months ago from a young man passing through his community. "First we gave him a 100-yuan note, but he refused it, saying it had a suspiciously worn corner. So we gave him another 100-yuan note, which he also refused, saying he did not have change." Finally, he found the correct change. After the young man left, Xu examined the bills himself and tested them in a nearby bank. They were both fake.

Yin Tianming, a construction team leader, complains that he received counterfeit money four times in one year buying materials wholesale from a market near the East Fourth Ring Road. "Each time it amounts to no more than several hundred yuan, but it's still annoying."

Wei Hua, a small shop owner near the Bell Temple, says she used to receive counterfeit currency from people who would buy small items with large bills. "When I told them I didn't have change, they would say the money wasn't that important, and that I could always pay them back next time. I was so happy at first, because I thought I was making a great sale. But then I realized that most of those big bills were fake."

Staff of a China Construction Bank branch all agree that a counterfeit 100-yuan note is pretty close to the real thing. "Its size, color, touch and sound when shaken are practically identical," said one staff member, who tested some bills on the request of a taxi driver. "Even our money-testing machine can't tell them apart."

Shi Baoke, vice-director of the operation management department of the People's Bank of China, lists various ways of manufacturing counterfeit currency. "90 percent is made by machine, the rest is handmade — copied, forged and printed from screens. Since high technology such as computer graphics and digital photographic printing are now used to imitate anti-counterfeit technologies, it's extremely difficult for the naked eye, and even for some common machines, to detect these forged bank notes."

Beijing police warn that border zones between city centers and rural areas are the most vulnerable. "People living in these areas are usually business people who are only temporary residents. Once they are cheated, they have no choice but to accept it as bad luck," sighs Xie.

Photo by Lu Guohong

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Cleaning Money Out of Dirty Laundry

By Su Wei

Over 150 people involved. Around 350 million yuan in tax evasion. A total 1.4 billion yuan in smuggled food oil (10,000 tons) and diesel (540,000 tons). On June 13 of this year, Guangzhou Customs arrested the last main criminal of a finished oil smuggling group, according to a report released in August.

Claiming the largest amount of people and money involved since 1949, the smuggling group had extended its business throughout the Pearl River Delta, ranging from Fanyu and Zhuhai to Dongwan and Shunde, and as far as Hong Kong.

"One significance of the case is that the group has established its own channel for capital turnover," said Xu Jianhong, vice-head of Shantou Economics Crime Investigation Team, Guangdong Province. He says they are sparing no efforts in cooperating with other related government departments to dig up underground banks supporting the smuggling group.

Early this year, 32 illegal banks in Guangdong and Fujian provinces were destroyed in a co-action of the Ministry of Public Security and the State Administration Bureau of Foreign Exchanges. Over 90 people were involved, and loots including cash totaling more than 30 million yuan were confiscated.

Last year, 78 underground banks were destroyed throughout China, with 519 people in-

involved and 27 arrested.

In a nine-month action to crack down on underground banks in Fujian in 2002, 21 underground banks were destroyed, involving 36 people. Over 470,000 yuan and foreign currency valued at 298,000 yuan were confiscated. The 168 bank accounts with savings over 9.93 million yuan were frozen.

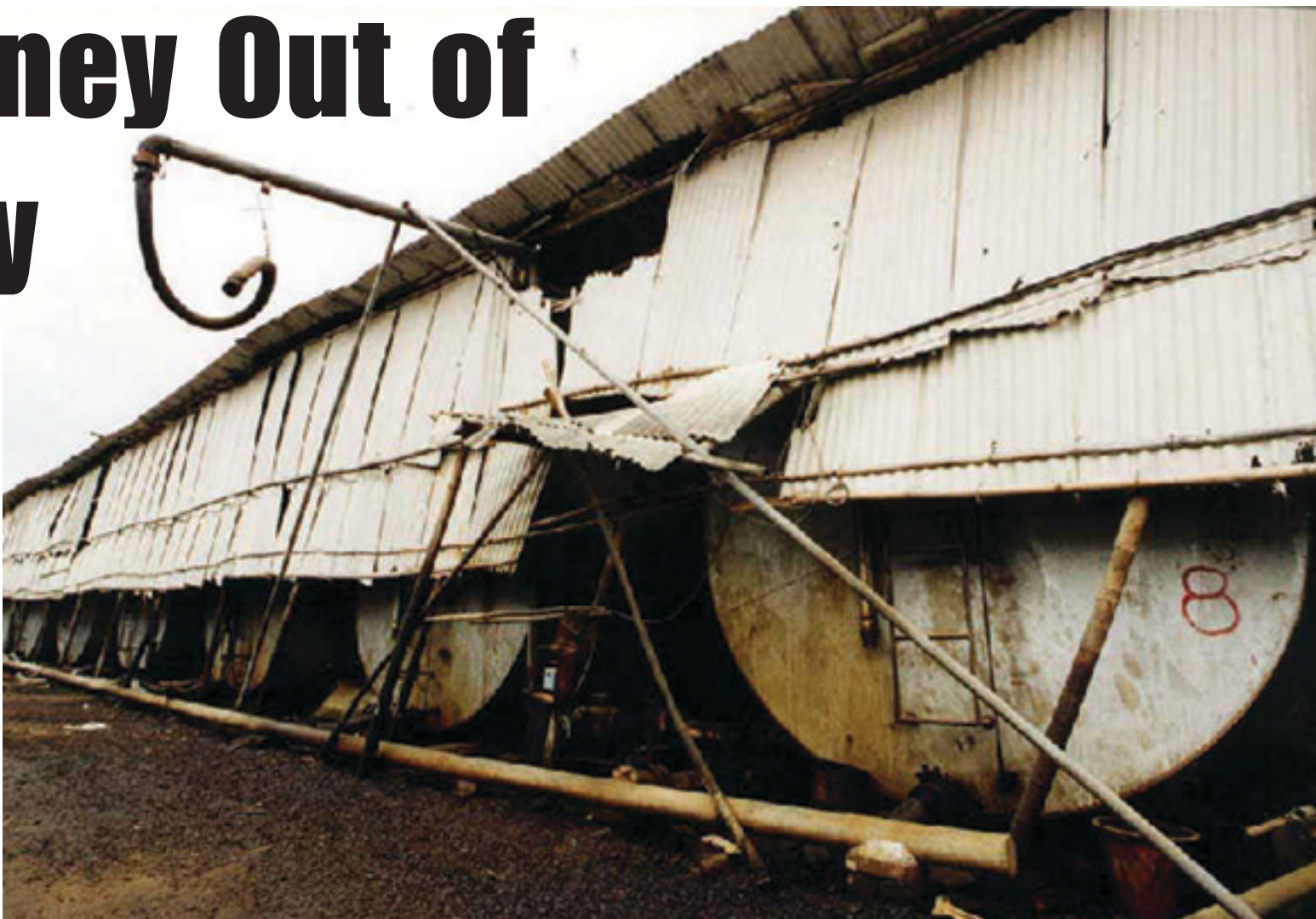
In 2001, 60 underground banks in Guangdong involving around 60 million yuan and 15 more involving 40 million yuan were closed by local governments.

The Ministry of Public Security and State Administration Bureau of Foreign Exchanges recently reaffirmed that one of their primary concerns is to crack down on underground banks. It is no secret that these illegal establishments are directly responsible for money laundering.

Laundering

Xu Pengzhan, manager of Xinxing Hongzhan Agricultural and By-product Store, Xinyuan District, Shantou, Guangdong Province, operated his underground banks to provide capital for the smuggling business for over a decade before he was finally arrested.

His banks thrived on his previous registration of over 20 companies with frequently changing corporate bank accounts. From September 1999 to March 2000, they supplied 18 billion yuan in cash flow to smugglers in Shantou.



Smuggled oil tanks hidden by asbestos shingles.

Photo by Liu Congxin

According to Shantou police, Xu's banks surpassed most of the local banks in volume of business. "Xu enjoys a higher reputation in service and credibility," said Xu Jianhong, vice-head of Economic Crimes Investigation Team, Shantou, Guangdong Province.

"For example, the official exchange rate between Hong Kong dollars and Chinese yuan is 1 to 1.08, while Xu's underground rate is fixed at 1 to 1.10, plus a minor processing fee, usually between one and two percent," said Officer Xu.

Shantou police say they detect smuggling crimes by investigat-

ing underground banks. "Smuggling groups always have a high demand for foreign currencies, which are still under strict government control. When considering their potential smuggling profits, the slightly higher exchange rate is trivial to them," Officer Xu continued.

The criminal Xu Jianhong operated by first putting money in the requested currency into his clients' designated bank accounts. After confirmation, clients would then deposit the principal and commission into Xu's own accounts. The entire procedure was conducted by telephone, without

contracts, so as to leave no trace of the illegal transactions.

Local police admitted Xu's cash trafficking, especially from Shenzhen to Hong Kong, was "an original and well-designed concept." They have yet to figure out how the money was transported to Hong Kong. They assume it was either through direct water transportation or through Hong Kong smuggling companies with fake licenses to remit the money or to slip through blockades.

In a case detected in Weihai, Shandong Province, and released by the State Administration Bureau of Foreign Exchanges earlier last month, the convicted Zhao Shengxuan confessed to illegally exchanging over US \$40 million since 2000. With the collaboration of underground banks in China and other banks overseas, Zhao established his business network in around ten Chinese cities including Qingdao, Yantai, Shenyang and Yanji.

Cui Zhehao, economist specializing in the underground economy, says that within the past three years, US \$53 billion in capital funds have flown overseas. "Money laundered annually through underground banks is estimated at 200 billion yuan, including 70 billion smuggled, 50 billion in official bribes, and the rest from foreign and non-governmental enterprises avoiding monitoring and taxation," he said.

Anti-laundering

Cai Zhongyu, from Zhongda Law Office, Shantou, Guangdong Province, observes that the more anti-laundering actions taken by the Chinese government, the more determined criminals become to launder their money, resulting in even more rampant laundering.

"Since money laundering is a global crime, more criminals worldwide are taking advantage of the security flaws in China's financial and legal systems, as well as of its rapid economical development," he says. "China just may be the next base for international money laundering."

Cui Zhehao says that as the money laundering business develops, professionals in non-financial industries such as lawyers and accountants are becoming increasingly involved. "In Chinese Criminal Law, money laundering includes drug dealing, smuggling, terrorism and other 'underground' crimes. However, illegal income from corruption and bribes is excluded," he said.

Cui believes the fight against money laundering is a collective effort by the whole society. "Governmental departments such as Bank of China, Taxation, Financing, Industrial and Commercial Bureaus, Customs, Foreign Currency Exchange Administration, Foreign Affairs and Judicial Department need cooperation from a series of organizations, including law and accounting offices, entertainment organizations and even trading companies."

Huang Weiding, another economist specializing in the underground economy, says the difference between Chinese and international regulations on money laundering may be to China's disadvantage in terms of recovering the laundered money. "For example, Chinese concepts of fleeing national capital conflict with international booty distribution rules. Some countries have agreed to reinvest all confiscated money in anti-laundering cooperation," he said. "But this is inconceivable to the Chinese. We are more likely to insist that state capital belongs to only one country — China, and not anyone else."

Li De, director of the Research Department of the People's Bank of China, has even more radical ideas. He believes that since criminals are prepared to risk their lives for the huge profits of money laundering, their punishment should be more severe: "Prison terms should be extended from between five and 10 years to life imprisonment, and fines should be increased from between five and 20 percent to between 50 and 200 percent!"

Locusts Refuse to Bite the Dust

By Jerry Ho

For the first time in several years, Beijing was spared its usual seasonal dust storms in spring 2003. This was due primarily to the Dust Sources Harness Project for Beijing and Tianjin, introduced in 2000. The project aimed to harness the Shiliin Gol Grassland, widely considered to be the main source of the dusts that have invaded Beijing through strong north-west winds in the past.

Once a wild desert, it has now been tamed into a typical grassland. Unfortunately however, Shiliin Gol League was severely plagued by locusts, infecting over 4.7 million hectares of newly recovered grassland.

Historical outbreak

The first locusts came to Shiliin Gol League in early June, and quickly developed into a plague unseen in the past hundred years. In less than two months, 2.3 million hectares of grasslands have been heavily plagued, including 920,000 hectares in Baruun Sunid Banner, representing one third of Shiliin Gol League's total grasslands.

Wang Guilian, a farmer in Baruun Sunid Banner, was stunned when locusts first swarmed in. "I didn't turn on the light all night. When I opened the door the next morning, thousands of locusts flew in and filled every crack of my house."

On the roads, cars leave behind thousands of dead locusts. In Sai Han, the central town of Baruun Sunid Banner, swarms of locusts have invaded every corner of the city and plastered themselves over every flat surface, both vertical and horizontal. "In some places, you can trample over a hundred locusts in just one step," said Su Peirong, a local resident of Baruun Sunid Banner. "This is definitely the most severe locust outbreak in history."

Locusts have emerged as far as Eren Hot, a city 120 kilometers away from the plagued grassland. At night, locusts cluster around the lights — neon



Locusts covering the pavement in Eren Hot.

Photo by Photocom

signs, street lamps, windows. Since the local government has ordered residents to turn off all lights so as not to attract the locusts, the whole city remains in darkness all night long.

Out of control

The scientific name of the devastating brown insects is *Oedaleus asiaticus*. Their lifespan consists of three phases — egg, larva and imago. The eggs live in the soil, where they can remain for years until the environment is suitable to further metamorphosis. Scientists believe that the sudden outburst of locusts is closely related to the abundant rainfalls in spring.

"We detected signs of a locust epidemic as early as June and promptly reported it to our superiors. But our Banner government cannot afford a complete and thorough eradication of the locusts," said Zhao Jinfa, director of Grassland Supervising Station of Baruun Sunid Banner. "So far we have only collected 45 barrels of insecticide and eight tractors to fight the locusts."

He explains that even with eight tractors working day and night, it still takes 10 full days to cleanse only 13,000 hectares of grassland — far behind the 920,000 hectares infected by locusts, of which 190,000 hectares are severely plagued.

It seems the most effective weapon against the locusts is

aircraft, which can spray insecticide over more than 667 hectares in one hour. But spraying all 190,000 hectares of severely plagued areas would cost a total of 600,000 yuan.

"This is beyond the means of both governments of the Banner and the League. All we can do is spray insecticides over a maximum of 110,000 hectares of infected grasslands, but there is do nothing we can do for the remaining 810,000 hectares," said Wang Hasi, deputy governor of Baruun Sunid Banner.

Only 10 percent of Shiliin Gol League's 4.7 million hectares of plagued grasslands have been treated with insecticide.

"Now over 90 percent of the locusts have entered the eclosion phase and begun to spawn," cried Zhao Jinfa in dismay. "Most effective is to kill the locusts in larva phase, while they still move slowly and are unable to spawn. Now we worry about the eggs planted in the soil which, if climate allows, will surely cause an even more severe plague next year."

Although the grasslands still appear green, all that remains from the locust ravages are the ruderals that neither feed cattle nor solidify the soil. Most of the spear grass, the locusts' favorite food, has been devoured.

"Spear grass is a kind of perennial plant whose underground rhizoid can solidify

soils," said Alata, captain of a local locust-extermination team. "This is normally the time when new grass grows and old grass dies away, but in these conditions neither of them can seed. Locusts have eaten up all the new grass and aborted its natural life cycle."

Scientific backlash

For the past two years, the local government has taken strict and effective measures to protect the vast grassland in Shiliin Gol League, which represents the first natural shield against dust storms invading Beijing.

It has controlled grazing and ensured continuous growing of grass. Traditional field grazing has been replaced by pen feeding. Herdsmen have been grouped together and introduced to centralized villages.

Living standards have improved steadily, so that locals will no longer depend solely on pasturing. After all these efforts, the grasslands were significantly restored, and northern China was relatively free of dusty weather in spring 2003.

After sudden locust epidemic however, all these efforts were made vain.

Wang Hasi, deputy governor of Baruun Sunid Banner, expressed bitter regret. "Two thirds of our people's endeavors in the past two years have been ruined by these loathsome insects."

Scientists point out that signs of locust outbreaks are hard to detect, and require close and continuous observation. Once they have been detected, subsequent precautionary actions must be taken before the insects are able to multiply and develop into a plague. Local governments should learn a good lesson from this disaster.

Local villagers say that larks and sand pheasants used to be quite common in the area, and posed the greatest threat to the locusts as their natural predator. Today however, larks are pet birds, and pheasants are gourmet dishes of city-dwellers.

History of China's Anti-Money Laundering Efforts

The Chinese Criminal Law effectuated on October 1, 1997, is the first to incriminate a wide range of people involved in money laundering. It defines money laundering crimes as drug dealing, underground crimes, terrorism and smuggling; however it fails to specify 'dirty' sources of income.

In June 2001, Bank of China established the first Anti-Money-Laundering Working Committee in China.

In April 2002, the Ministry of Public Security established the Department

of Money Laundering Crime Investigation.

In July last year, the People's Bank of China established the department of payment and trading monitoring and anti-money laundering. Chinese media claimed it marked the formalization of China's anti-money laundering operations.

In March this year, China began to consider joining the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), as the FATF first held its conference in China.

Ma Yue was in fact a very intelligent girl, who had simply become reclusive after not communicating with others for so long. Ma Yue was especially fond of imagination, but had had little opportunity to express her thoughts and explore her ideas.

I am not a Fool



Ma Yue, as a child.



Ma Yue and her mother



Ma Yue's mother

By Guo Yuandan

Life would have been a whole different story for her if Ma Yue, IQ 138, had not been called a fool by her classmates when she was six years old. In the following ten years, the little girl was sent to a psychiatric hospital by her own mother, was diagnosed as a lesbian, and made two suicide attempts, until she finally met middle school teacher Li Shengzhen, who ended the nightmare.

I am not a fool

As a child, Ma Yue was timid, clever and sensible. In order to receive the best education, she was sent to a key primary school in the capital, where the teaching system was particularly strict. However, at the beginning of her happy school life, Ma Yue discovered she had poor eyesight, which led her to fall behind the other students. Her classmates took advantage of her weakness, called her "fool," and on cold days, threw her cap in the snow and pelted her with stones. Ma Yue's parents and teachers were unaware of her suffering until she finally refused to go to school.

Ma Yue was transferred to another school, where she was confused by the new program and often failed her assignments. Ma Yue's mother was called to the school constantly. As a college teacher herself, the young mother felt she was losing face, and took out her shame on her daughter by scolding and beating her angrily. Once, during a reading test, the instructor stood over Ma Yue and told the headmaster, "The child is a little bit stupid." Ma Yue was indeed dumbstruck.

At home, all of Ma Yue's relatives looked down on the black sheep of the family. Her uncle said to her mother, "I am worried about Ma Yue. I think there is something wrong with her brain." Hearing this insult, her mother, overwhelmed with anger, struck her daughter with a disgusted blow. Ma Yue could no longer feel anything but her

poor mother's shame.

Back at school, Ma Yue's classmates ritually excluded her from their games and continued to consider her a fool. One day, she wrote on the ground with a piece of stone: "I am not a fool!"

Ma Yue was transferred to another school. But by this time she was already disappointed with her teachers and peers, and fed up with school altogether. It was not long before she began to plot her escape.

Ma Yue went up to her mother with trembling hands, pressed a quilt on her mother's head and whispered, "Witch!" Then she told her she didn't recognize anything or anyone, not even her. Ma Yue's frightened mother promptly brought her to the Children's Hospital, where doctors advised her to seek the psychiatric ward. Reluctantly, her mother turned her daughter over.

I am not a lesbian

Ma Yue was at first overjoyed to be in the hospital, thinking she would never have to go to school again. But no sooner had her parents walked out the door than the psychiatric staff immediately shackled her to the bed. In horror, she cried, "I am not mad, I was just pretending!" But the words of the girl who cried wolf fell on deaf ears. Her parents were strictly forbidden to visit. Realizing her gross underestimation of the situation, Ma Yue finally told her parents the truth. Her mother believed her and took her home.

After that trial, Ma Yue's mother took Ma Yue to test her IQ. The young girl's unusually high score of 138 inspired a new ray of hope to both mother and daughter.

Soon Ma Yue began junior high school, but her old classmates would not let her forget her past. Ma Yue longed to pour out her heart. It was at that time that a very special physics teacher entered the picture. This teacher cared for Ma Yue like a little sister, which made Ma Yue feel

warm for the first time in her life.

When Ma Yue was forced to transfer to a senior high school, her separation from the physics teacher left her in a dark state of despair, and she failed her final semester examination. She asked her mother to take her to see a psychiatrist, who asked Ma Yue to write down the words hidden deep down in her heart. Ma Yue finally handed back a 10,000-word essay. Reading Ma Yue's personal words, her mother began to understand her daughter for the first time.

Meanwhile, after reading how Ma Yue missed her physics teacher so much that she couldn't concentrate on her studies, the psychiatrist diagnosed Ma Yue as a homosexual. Mother and daughter were dumbfounded. The physics teacher refused to see Ma Yue again.

In 1995, Ma Yue, then 16 years old, slashed her wrists to end her life. Her life was saved. She made a second attempt, and was saved again.

I am a human being

Just as Ma Yue was going mad for real, a new messenger of hope came to her in the form of Li Shengzhen, one of her mother's friends, who was then teaching at the Tongzhou District No.2 Middle School in the east of Beijing.

One sunny morning in May 1995, heavy-hearted Ma Yue set off alone to meet the unknown teacher. Once Li Shengzhen saw the scar on Ma Yue's wrist and heard the suffering in the young girl's heart, she felt deeply for Ma Yue. As their conversation progressed, Li found that Ma Yue was in fact a very intelligent girl, who had simply become reclusive after not communicating with others for so long. Ma Yue was especially fond of imagination, but had had little opportunity to express her thoughts and explore her ideas. Li asked Ma Yue if she would like to attend her school. Trusting Li as someone who truly understood her, Ma Yue agreed.

Ma Yue's first step in reintegrating school life was choosing where to sit. Li introduced her to one girl saying, "She is very nice." With Li's encouragement, Ma Yue mustered up the courage to ask, "I would like to sit beside you, will you accept me?" To Ma Yue's surprise, the girl smiled and welcomed her. From then on, Ma Yue thought everything else was a piece of cake.

Since Ma Yue had fallen seriously behind after six months out of school, Li gave her special attention, and instructed the other teachers to be extra patient. After the first mid-term exam, Ma Yue ranked No.8 in her class.

Li was pleased with Ma Yue's positive response, and in the days that followed, she planned activities to help Ma Yue restore confidence in herself and continue to strive for success. She even encouraged Ma Yue to run for a position as one of the class leaders. Initially shy, Ma Yue finally agreed to compete for the position of organizing class recreational and sports activities.

Although Ma Yue trembled with both stage fright and incertitude as she delivered her election speech, Li found that Ma Yue expressed personal courage, good manner and sound opinion. So did Ma Yue's fellow students. Receiving the congratulations of her teachers and classmates after winning the election, Ma Yue was moved to tears. This small victory was the happiest experience in whole her life.

Four years later in 1999, Ma Yue enrolled at the China Youth Politics College. Her mother expressed profound gratitude for her daughter's rehabilitation and progress in life: "Li is a great teacher. What she has done for Ma Yue is far more than I could ever do for her." In an altruistic effort to repent for her failed parental guidance, Ma Yue's mother has now joined her daughter in the research of adolescent psychology.

Courtesy of CCTV's Narration.
Pictures from CCTV

Palace Museum Exhibits Lucky Scepters

By Iris Miao
Two-hundred-and-seven *ruyi* scepters, a traditional ornament meaning good luck, are currently on display at the Palace Museum.

The artifacts, most of which are on public show for the first time, are from the Forbidden City's collection of over 2,000 *ruyi* scepters, most of which were used by or specially made for emperors of the mid-Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

"The scepters on display, about one tenth of the total collection, represent the most treasured ones here," Liu Yue, a researcher from the Ancient Artifacts Department of the Palace Museum, told *Beijing Today*, "It's a bit of a pity that the exhibition facilities are not quite as perfect as we would wish."

The hall in which the exhibition is being held, Jingren Palace, on the east side of the Forbidden City, was built in 1420. It was the birthplace of one of China's greatest emperors, Emperor Kangxi in 1654, and after 1703, was used as the residences of the emperors' concubines. Currently it functions as a temporary show room, but lacks the temperature and humidity control facilities that are standard in modern museums.

Despite such shortcomings, the centuries old *ruyi* scepters, made of gold, silver, red

sandalwood, boxwood, bamboo, crystal, enamel and porcelain, and decorated with jade, jadeite, precious stones, pearl and agate, still shine in the dim light of their showcases.

Historical records about this traditional craft appeared as early as 2,000 years ago. Although they later became purely ornamental in function, they originally had a very practical use, as a royal backscratcher, or *bu qiu ren*. "The earliest *ruyi* found so far is from the ancient city of Qufu, in Shandong Province. Although broken, it is clearly in the shape of a hand," Liu said.

How and when this practical tool evolved into ornamental handicraft remains a mystery, but, "it probably has something to do with the Buddhism, as it is among of the tools that the monks carried daily with them."

From the collection of the Qing court, there are several iron *ruyi* passed down from the Ming court, suggesting a somewhat more humble heritage. The iron

ruyi on show in the exhibition, though inlaid with silver, still emits an aura of simple elegance. In the same showcase, a 30-centimeter-long solid gold *ruyi* attracts the most attention. On the handle of the scepter, four Chinese characters in turquoise express a wish for "Good Luck for Ten Thousand Years."

During the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795), 60 *ruyi* were made, each marking a different year of the sixty-year cycle of the Chinese lunar calendar. The one on show is marked with the year Guiwei, meaning Qianlong would have used it during the year 1763. This year, 2003, is also a year of Guiwei.

Ruyi reached their peak of popularity in the imperial court of the Qing Dynasty. Any grand occasion, such as national holidays, birthdays of members of the royal

court, coronations and weddings, was an appropriate time for princes and officials to give a *ruyi* as a gift. The court also bestowed *ruyi* as gifts to provincial officials and foreign envoys.

One of the more unusual exhibits is a white sandalwood scepter. From its outer appearance, there seems nothing special about it, but the handle and head are movable, and inside, there are erotic paintings concealed.

"The larger ones were placed on tables or chairs as decorations, the smaller ones were held in the hand, just something to fiddle with," said Liu Yue, and pointing to a *ruyi* inside a jade vase, "putting *ruyi* in a bottle like this, literally means peace and good luck."

The exhibition will run until January 30, 2004.



Photo by Gloom

Miniature 'Grand Fountains' Unveiled

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Described as the most expensive handicraft ever made in China, a miniature replica of the Grand Fountains glittered brilliantly at its unveiling Tuesday at Yuanmingyuan.

Yuanmingyuan, the Garden of the Gardens, also known as the old Summer Palace, was destroyed by French and British troops over a century ago, and have lain in ruins ever since. One of the most celebrated sites of the garden were the Grand Fountains, built during the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1622-1722).

The miniature of the fountains, 2.5 meters long, 1.6 meters wide and 1.8 meters high, is made of gold and precious stones from all over the world. Using 60 kilograms of pure gold from Switzerland and Hetian jade from Xinjiang as a foundation, the model is adorned with 2,333 diamonds, including one weighing four carats, 649 sapphires, 142 rubies, 29 emeralds, 205 grains of jadeite and 582 natural pearls from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand.

The magnificent artwork took dozens of craftsmen five years to complete and is valued at 233 million yuan.

The Grand Fountains consisted of three sections; the waterworks, the viewing platform and the gazebo. The waterworks included several different shaped fountain pools containing altogether 176 fountains. The viewing platform, on the south side, was where the emperor and his entourage sat and enjoyed the view. The gazebo, at the rear of the waterworks, once held treasures from around the world.

Asked why such a vast sum was spent to make the miniature, Song Jun, vice president of Shenzhen Orient Palace Artifacts, told *Beijing Today*, "We just want to show how the Grand Fountains looked before they were destroyed by the British and French troops. Since the fountains have long been a symbol of Yuanmingyuan in peoples' hearts, we made a miniature to show what it once was, and the gold and jade we used are an appropriate representation of their former magnificence."

As to how the making of the model was funded, Song declined to comment, saying it was a commercial secret.

Song also expressed the hope that the miniature will someday go abroad to show the world the magnificence of Chinese artwork and culture.


The replica of the fountains will remain on public display at Yuanmingyuan for one year.



Photo by Miao Yajie

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 加裕华装饰

By Darlene Lee

While it may not cover every aspect of cutting-edge contemporary art in China, the Chinese Art Today show that opened on Saturday at the Chinese Millennium Monument Museum does offer an interesting, if somewhat packaged, picture of the state of the domestic art scene.

The monstrous show features over 700 works from 268 artists, filling all the available exhibition halls in the museum's first and second floors and even occupying area in two basement levels.

"Chinese Art Today will become a biennial event and differs from the Beijing Biennale in that the works included are not selected around any given theme," explained curator Guo Xiaochuan.

Wang Qiang, one of the artists featured in the experimental art section of the exhibition, said, "The point of the show is to enhance the quality of cultural life by giving the general public a taste of contemporary art, bringing art back from the fringe into mainstream discourse."

Guo's reputation for getting exhibit sponsorship meshes nicely with the China Millennium Monument's penchant for big, flashy shows where artistic considerations are often secondary to commercial ones. Guo brought in contributions from five organizations totaling over 6 million yuan for this show.

Though the museum expects to recoup its investment through visitor ticket sales (the target is 500,000 visitors for the month-long event), two Shandong Province-based companies will only receive an artwork from each of the participating artists for their generous contributions that total 4 million yuan.

"Works on display are also available for purchase through either the curator or by contacting the artists directly," added Guo.

The show itself is organized into five basic categories: traditional ink and wash, oil painting, block prints, sculpture and experimental art. The experimental sections have been relegated to the basement levels and are hard to find, but worth it. Once on level B1, visitors can rest on a few lime green couches while surrounded by the videos that make up Wang Guofeng's work *Chinese Utopia*, a witty look at the juxtapositions of today's Beijing.

Featured artists range in age from 28 to 94 years old. Only 38, or 14 percent, are women, which while low is still a higher rate than at most major domestic art shows to date.

Most practising artists in China today are steadfastly mired in traditional art forms or copying styles directly from the West while struggling for legitimacy in mainstream society.



A sculpture from a series of works by Cai Zhisong greets visitors on the museum's first floor.

Photos by Chen Bai

Fine Art, Tepid Curation at New Show

Planning for the exhibition started in 1999, with the sorting of 2,000 artist applications. "There were no application fees," noted Guo.

Notably absent are many of the big names who have made contemporary Chinese art famous globally, such as Cai Guoqiang, Xu Bing, Fang Lijun, Tian Liming and Sui Jianguo. "The original invitation included people like Xu Bing and Cai Guoqiang, so I was quite happy to be invited," noted Wang Guofeng. Not only did these big names not show, but of the 40 originally selected experimental artists, just 12 ended up participating. Whether they pulled out or their work was not accepted is a subject of debate.

Visitors are likely to reach three general conclusions about the state of Chinese art today. One, that most practicing artists in China today are steadfastly mired in traditional art forms or copying styles directly from the West, with only a minority creating the breakthrough works that have garnered China so much international art world recognition.

Second, artists themselves are still struggling for legitimacy in mainstream



Chen Qi's Dream Butterfly

society. The rambling layout of the works, the uber-traditional categorization by art material and the displays packed as tight as sardines all belie a lack of consideration for the artists and their works.

Finally, this show makes clear that Chinese audiences have room to improve their art viewing etiquette. Despite clear signs forbidding photography (plus the availability of images to download from the website), children were instructed by their caretakers to clamber

past cordoning ropes, put their hands all over artwork and get photographed doing so.

Bilingual explanatory placards with artists' photos make a stab at fulfilling Guo's mission for the show of "increasing dialogue with the general public and raising general awareness of issues in contemporary art". Unfortunately, these write-ups often succeed only in further confounding viewers.

Well-known Beijing-based curator Huang Du, who is

a member of the selection committee of artists for the Experimental Section for this show, recommended, "To really help the general public come to their own understanding of the show, it might help to group the works by subject matter rather than by the art material. Also, the experimental section was very difficult to find, which I hope wasn't intentional."

The sheer quantity of works makes for a dizzying exposure to high culture. Of special note are the sculptures *Eight Brothers* by Lian Shuo, the components of which are cleverly placed throughout the show and Cheng Zhiguan's silver *Ant Babies*.

Two women's works in the traditional ink and wash section display the tongue-in-cheek humor that made Chinese Pop Art so well-known internationally -- Liu Yen's *Victory of the Punks* and Luo Ying's *3 Inch Lotus*. Qiu Deshu's *Fissure Change* and Dang Zhen's *Echo Series* are refreshingly light landscapes, also in the traditional ink and wash section.

Among other strong works are Wang Yenping's *New Screen* series of collages, including

Single Back Chair and Eight Immortals Table (a commonly seen square dining table for eight), lovely pieces unfortunately not shown to their best advantage. Song Yonghong's oil paintings of shower scenes are humorous and fun, somehow leaving the viewer feeling cleansed, and Hang Hongwei's *Northern Cities* oils have a uniquely light and loose touch for such a potentially heavy subject.

Luan Wei's *Lotus* series employs central feminine imagery with bold color, based on a uniquely Chinese flower. Wang Qiang's figures painted on the inside of clothing are ironic takes on the meaning of clothing in hiding or enhancing sexuality, and well worth a look see.

Where: China Millennium Monument Museum, 9A Fushing Lu, Haidian **When:** 8:30 am - 5:30 pm, Monday to Sunday, till September 4. **Tel:** 6851 3322 **Price:** 20 yuan per person, discounts for students and senior citizens

Darlene Lee is an American-born Chinese artist working in Beijing.

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Golden Season for Concerts

By Wang Xiaoxiao
September promises to be a blisteringly hot time for lovers of middle of the road pop, with four stars from Taiwan raising the temperature in Beijing.

Jeff Chang

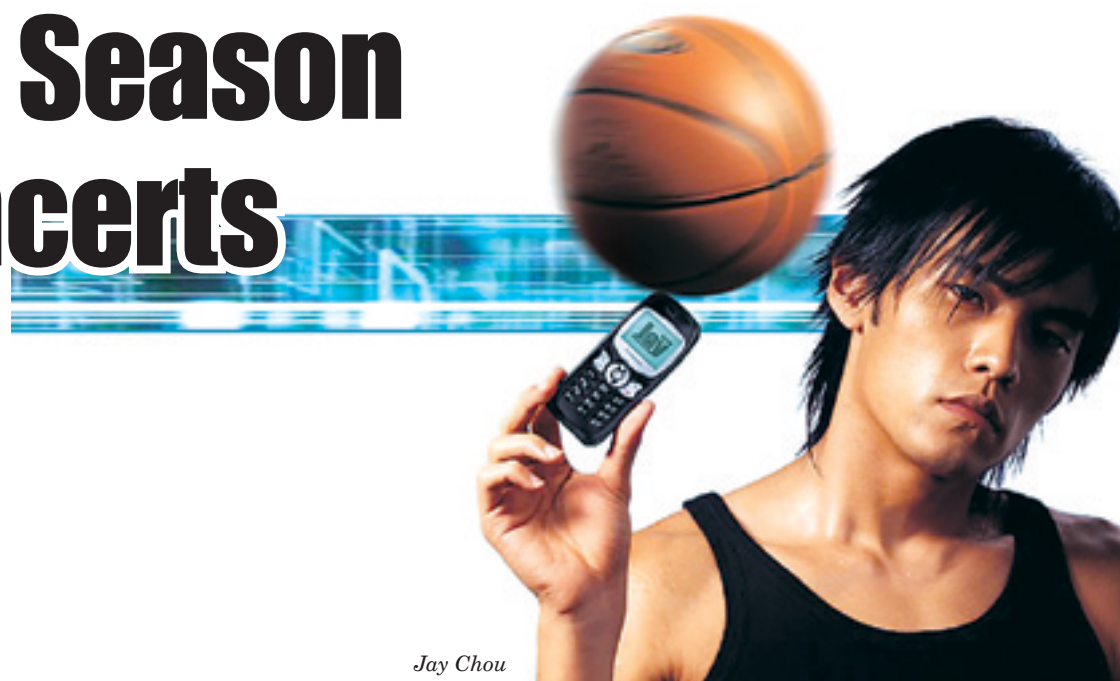
On September 5, "Prince of lads" Jeff Chang (Zhang Xinzhe) returns to Beijing for a concert at Worker's Stadium. Two special guests, the classically trained Sky Wu (Wu Sikai) and Harlem Yu (Yu Chengqing) promise to add a touch of diversity to the evening's entertainment.

Chang will also give fans the opportunity to witness his virtuosity on the violin, accompanied by a full symphony orchestra under the direction of British conductor Nick Smith.

While it might be uncharitable to suggested that the unusually low ticket prices reflect that Chang is a little past his use-by date, at 50 to 280 yuan, they are certainly a bargain.

Chief Chao

While Jeff Chang is igniting Worker's Stadium, over on the



Jay Chou

west side of town Chief Chao (Zhao Chuan) will perform at the Capital Gymnasium, creating something of a dilemma for loyal fans of the two. Chao was originally scheduled to play in Beijing in April this year, but the concert was postponed because of the SARS epidemic.

Unfazed by the low ticket prices for Chang's concert, Chao told the press he did not want the concert promoters to lower prices merely as a ploy to attract fans. "My fans will still be my fans, they won't change because of money."

Tickets to Chief Chao range

from 180-880 yuan.

Jay Chou

The most eagerly anticipated of the four concerts is no doubt Jay Chou's. With his trademark *nunchakas* and traditional kung fu outfit, Jay Chou (Zhou Jielun) is something of a role model for Chinese teenagers.

Chou will perform on September 12 at Worker's Stadium, in what will be his first ever concert in Beijing, and promises fans they will get to hear all his hits, including *Nunchakas* and *Ren Zhe*.

At a concert in Taipei last year, Chou astonished his fans by appearing variously as a sol-

dier, a vampire and a warrior. How many costume changes he will make during this show remains a closely guarded secret.

Tickets are 80-980 yuan.

Emil Chau

The 43-year-old Emil Chau (Zhou Huajian) has confirmed the second stop of his 2003 tour will be in Beijing, September 19, at the Capital Gymnasium, following a successful Shanghai show last Friday. Accompanied by an entourage of over 100, Chau promises fans a show featuring state-of-the-art stage design, lighting and sound. Tickets are 80-1,000 yuan.

HK Cop Drama in Bidding for Oscar

By Chen Ying

The Hong Kong Film Association announced last week it has nominated *Infernal Affairs* (Wu Jian Dao) for the best foreign film at next year's Academy Awards. It will be the first time Hong Kong has put forward a film for the Oscars.

Directed by Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, *Infernal Affairs* is a tense thriller featuring Hong Kong superstars Andy Lau and Tony Leung. Unlike many contemporary Hong Kong films, the movie favors of a more stylised and subdued plot that builds on emotional and psychological tension, in place of over-the-top action.

The movie swept up almost every major prize at the Hong Kong Film Awards this April, grabbing seven of the total 19 awards, including best film, best director and best actor.

The blockbuster attracted a huge following across Asia, and was Hong Kong's top-grossing movie last year, chalking up more than HK \$55 million (US \$7 million) at the box office. Brad Pitt's production company, Plan B, has bought the rights to an American remake of *Infernal Affairs* for US \$1.75 million.

The sequel, *Infernal Affairs II*, is due to premiere on October 1 in Hong Kong.

Aida to Entrance Beijing

By Guo Yuandan

Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, one of the world's best loved operas, is to be staged at Beijing's Workers' Stadium on September 27.

The opera tells the love story between Radamis, an Egyptian soldier, and his captive Aida, set during the time of the Pharaohs.

The production, directed by Kresimir Dolenic, manager and art director of the Croatian National Theatre will involve more than 4,000 artists from Russia, German, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia and Austria.

Italian tenor Janez Loderich will perform the role of Radamis and Hungarian soprano Georgina Von Benza will play Aida. The cast also



Model for the proposed stage design

includes Zlatomira Nilolova, Bonaldo Giaiotti and Valentin Enceve.

Costing an estimated 30 million yuan, the production will feature a stage of over 6,000 square meters, complete with 40-meter pyramid, elephants, camels, lions, tigers, boa constrictors, horses and parrots. Ticket prices range from 120 to 2,800 yuan.

New Albums from Kelly Chen

By Hans Leu

Canto-pop queen Kelly Chen is back after a six-month sabbatical, with two brand new albums, one in Cantonese and one in Mandarin.

Xin Kou Bu Yi (You Don't Mean It) was released throughout China on August 1, while the Cantonese version was released in Hong Kong on August 10.

In video for the poppy Yao Gun (*Shake Shake Rock*), written for a McDonald's advertising campaign, Chen is joined by South Korean movie star Park Yong-ha.

Music videos for two other tracks, *Wo Yaode Zhi Shi Ai* (All I Want Is Love) and *Shi Wo Bu Hao* (It's My Fault) were shot in South Korea. Beijing Jingwen Records has included in the release eight karaoke tracks and a large poster of Chen.

WORLDWIDE

Newell to Direct New Harry Potter Movie

Mike Newell, the British director of *Four Weddings and A Funeral*, will direct the fourth Harry Potter movie, Warner Brothers Pictures has announced.

Newell will begin work on *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* in April, the company said Sunday. American Chris Columbus directed the first two movie versions of JK Rowling's hugely successful series about a boy wizard.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, the third film in the series, is currently being filmed under the direction of Alfonso Cuaron, and the studio said that as the two productions will overlap, it was not feasible for him to direct both.

Newell, 61, also directed *Donnie Brasco*, with Al Pacino, and has recently completed *Mona Lisa Smile* with Julia Roberts.

(AP)



Joe Perry and Steve Tyler

Aerosmith Is 'Wild' About Music for Movies

When it comes to movie music, Aerosmith cannot be stereotyped.

The band's film contributions range from its bad-boy turn in the 1978 musical *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (which included a hard-rock version of the Beatles' *Come Together*) to its first No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 with the ballad *I Don't Want to Miss a Thing* from 1998's *Armageddon*.

This year, Aerosmith recorded a new song, *Lizard Love*, for the Paramount Pictures animated feature *Rugrats Go Wild!*

Meanwhile, lead guitarist Joe Perry has contributed score music to Small Planet Pictures' *This Thing of Ours*, which opened July 18 in select US cities. Rhythm guitarist Brad Whitford has a cameo in the film.



Arnold Schwarzenegger

Schwarzenegger leads in Personal Wealth

Arnold Schwarzenegger leads the pack of California gubernatorial candidates not just in name recognition and voter intentions - but also in wealth.

Four of the 150-some candi-

dates for California governor disclosed financial holdings worth more than one million dollars Sunday, but the movie star outshone them all.

Schwarzenegger released his 2000 and 2001 tax returns, reporting income of more than 57 million dollars, the *Los Angeles Times* said.

His 2002 return has not been filed yet, his campaign said.



Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck

Movie Flop Fails to Shake Wedding Plans

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck are still making wedding plans, a source close to Lopez told *Associated Press*. Affleck's publicist added, "they're fine."

Rumors about a break-up began after Affleck allegedly spent time with a couple of strippers. And it did not help that Lopez was seen around town without the multi-million-dollar engagement ring he gave her.

In addition, Ben and Jen's new movie *Gigli* has become a box-office bomb, with some wondering if the film's failure will put more stress on the couple.

In another blow to J Lo, an Internet survey concluded that Jennifer Aniston's backside tops Lopez's bottom.

(AP)

Censors Say Malaysians Can See Jim Carrey's 'Bruce'

Malaysian film censors have ruled that Hollywood comedy *Bruce Almighty* can play after all in the mostly Muslim country's cinemas despite objections from the religious affairs minister, its distributor said Monday.

"They viewed it from every angle and found it was a typical Jim Carrey comedy, with nothing sensitive about it," Anna Ng, local general manager for distributor Buena Vista, told Reuters.

The Universal Studio's film, in which God challenges Bruce (Carrey) to see if he can run the world better after he blames the Almighty for all his problems, was passed by Malaysian censors and was to have opened in cinemas on August 7.

(Reuters)

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David Sommeil of Manchester City is challenged by Barcelona's newly-signed player Ronaldinho (center) during a pre-season friendly last Sunday in Manchester, England.

Photo by Photocome

Soccer Powers Seek New Blood for Coming Season

By Hou Mingxin

After a short rest, football fans are looking forward to the start of the new English Premiership season on Sunday, followed by the kick-offs of the Italian Serie A and Spanish League at the end of the month.

With the return of regular play quickly approaching, clubs are maneuvering to recruit new talent and keep their good players to strengthen their squads for runs at the league titles.

Undoubtedly the most sensation deal made over the brief summer vacation was the trade of Manchester United superstar midfielder David Beckham to Spanish team and recent Beijing visitors Real Madrid.

With the addition of Beckham, some have speculated that Real, now home to six major international stars include three FIFA footballers of the year, may have its best roster ever.

In the new season, the Spanish champions are most likely to look to not only repeat their victory in the domestic league, but also to bring home the club's tenth European Champions League title.

Another team making waves over the summer is British club Chelsea, which has been spending heavily to import new talent.

Since the club was taken over by billionaire Russian businessman Roman Abramovich last month, Chelsea has spent nearly 100 million dollars to purchase players, far outstripping the combined payments of all the other 19 Premiership clubs. Yet it has been widely reported that the figure represents only half of the new owner's total budget.

That kind of financial power, backed by some strong recruits, has many football fans and experts expecting Chelsea to emerge as a serious power in the league and break the long domination of Manchester United and Arsenal.

Veron: Chelsea's new star

Last Wednesday, Argentine international playmaker Juan Sebastian Veron signed a four-year deal with Chelsea after Manchester United had agreed to the sale of the midfielder earlier in the day.

The 28-year-old tied up the \$24 million move after passing a medical examination, just hours after English midfielder Joe Cole had completed a \$10.6 million transfer to the west London club

from West Ham United.

The Veron and Cole deals took Chelsea's summer spending beyond the \$93.3 million mark.

Chelsea chief executive Trevor Birch told the club's official web site, "Today we have bought a young Englishman with huge potential and a great champion who can lead us on to better things. It has been a marvelous day for Chelsea."

Veron was the sixth high-profile signing made by Chelsea since the takeover by Abramovich last month.

This summer, the team has also signed Irish winger Damien Duff from Blackburn Rovers for \$27.3 million, West Ham defender Glen Johnson for a speculated \$9.6 million, Cameroonian midfielder Geremi for \$11.1 million and English defender Wayne Bridge \$11.2 million.

A report in sports website Teamtalk.com last Sunday said that Romanian striker Adrian Mutu is in talks with Chelsea over a projected £15.8 million move from Italian Parma. Mutu is rated as one of the best striking prospects in Italian Serie A having scored 17 league goals last season plus four in the UEFA Cup.

Kleberon tipped to fill Veron's boots

Manchester United chief Sir Alex Ferguson is looking for Kleberon to fill the void left by Juan Sebastian Veron's departure to Chelsea, according to a report on the team's web site.

He became the first Brazilian to sign with United when the £5.93 million deal went through on Tuesday.

Ferguson expects Kleberon to have a major impact on the team, and was quoted in the web site report as saying, "He is young and we certainly think he is one of the most progressive young players in Brazil at the moment."

Kleberon is the fifth player signed by Ferguson this summer, following the recruiting of Cristiano Ronaldo, Eric Djemba-Djemba, David Bellion and goalkeeper Tim Howard.

According to a report published on teamtalk.com, Barcelona defender Carles Puyol would be happy to move to Manchester United if it would help his current club in their battle against debt.

Rumours have surfaced in the Spanish media recently of an imminent £14 million bid from Old

Trafford for the services of the 25-year-old.

The Spanish international, who can play at right-back or in the center of defense, is believed to have been targeted by United to strengthen the English champions' inconsistent back four.

Ronaldinho to help Barca bounce back

On July 19, World Cup Winner Brazilian Ronaldinho was unveiled as a Barcelona player after completing a move from Paris St. Germain for an initial transfer fee of \$28.2 million that could rise as high as \$33.8 million.

The 23-year-old, who will inherit the number 10 shirt from departing Argentine Juan Roman Riquelme, was given a hero's welcome by Barca fans.

Ronaldinho's decision to join Barcelona in preference to Manchester United or Real Madrid was based in part on the recent experiences of Romario, Ronaldo and Rivaldo – three Brazilians who all triumphed during their time at the Nou Camp.

"I want to follow in their footsteps," Ronaldinho told Reuters last month after signing the contract. "They are all great players, world champions, and in part they're the reason why I'm here."

Barcelona president Joan Laporta, who promised during the election campaign to sign at least one world class player with a media profile to match, said the arrival of Ronaldinho would help the club recoup their reputation as one of the world game's biggest forces.

"Barcelona already has great world renown but Ronaldinho will help project the club's image around the globe," Laporta said.

Ronaldinho's capture is a major coup for Barcelona, who is intent on bouncing back after a poor domestic campaign last season in which they ended up sixth to arch rivals Real Madrid.

Despite reaching the quarter-finals of the Champions league last season, they will have to make do with the UEFA Cup next season.

Coach Radomir Antic was sacked in June and replaced with former Dutch international Frank Rijkaard, who became Barca's third Dutch coach after Johan Cruyff and Louis van Gaal.

Barca's other close season recruits were Fenerbahce's Turkish goalkeeper Rustu Recber, rated one of the best stoppers

at last year's World Cup, Spanish midfielder Luis Garcia, Mexican defender Rafael Marquez and highly-rated teenage striker Ricardo Quaresma.

Milan signs Brazil's Cafu

In Early June, European champions AC Milan signed a two-year contract with Brazilian full back Cafu.

Cafu, the captain of Brazil's World Cup-winning side last year, was a free agent after leaving AS Roma at the end of this season.

Milan said on their official website they had agreed to the terms of a contract with Cafu that would run until June 2005.

The 33-year-old attacking right-back joined Roma from Brazilian club Palmeiras in 1997 and was a major factor in the team's victory in the Italian league in 2001.

Early last month, Milan rejected a £34 million bid from Chelsea for the club's defender Alessandro Nesta. The 27-year-old was a key player in Milan's Champions League glory last season.

Inter Says Vieri is not on the market

Last week, Inter Milan denied reports that Italian international forward Christian Vieri would be joining big-spending Chelsea.

It had been widely reported that the Italian ace was next on the hit-list for the Blues' new billionaire owner Roman Abramovich.

A deal for Vieri in excess of £20 million had been rumored, but Inter's sports director Marco Branca told the club's web site succinctly, "Vieri is not on the market."

While the Blues have blown every other club out of the water with their summer spending spree, it has been argued that they still need to snap up a real big-hitter to compete with Manchester United and Arsenal.

The team's several new players are all quality acquisitions, but Chelsea still lacks a match-winner to rank alongside Ruud van Nistelrooy or Thierry Henry.

A deal to bring the 30-year-old Vieri, who was Serie A's top scorer last season, to the Premiership would surely have changed that, however.

The former Juventus, Atletico Madrid and Lazio frontman has scored goals at the highest level wherever he has played, including in the Champions League.

Domestic Grand Prix Dreams Draw Closer

By James Liu

Cheng Congfu is on the fast track to Grand Prix glory after becoming the first Chinese driver signed by Formula 1 team West McLaren Mercedes last Wednesday. Today, he is celebrating his 19th birthday in the British city Hull with his Manor Motorsport teammates from the British Formula Renault racing circuit.

McLaren has agreed to provide Cheng will nearly £15,000 to sponsor his training and racing, giving rise to speculation that he could become the first Chinese to enter the F1 circuit after a few years of preparations.

F1 is a topic of growing interest in this country, with Cheng's historic sponsorship and Shanghai's signing of a contract with the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) to host an annual Grand Prix race from 2004 to 2010.

China's first hopes of hosting an F1 race were dashed after the Zhuhai F1 Circuit track in Guangdong Province, finished in 1998, failed to pass FIA safety inspections. Yet domestic racing enthusiasts clearly did not give up hope.

Beijing-born Cheng Congfu inherited his passion for F1 from his father, Cheng Yingguo, a longtime fan. Cheng started racing karts at the age of eight, and won his first championship in a local karting race four years later. When he was of age, his father sent him to study in the UK, where he got the chance to receive real professional racing training.

In 2002 Cheng joined the Asian Formula Renault circuit and won three races. He was unable to compete in rest of the season because the race schedule conflicted with his school courses, but still ended up placing second overall.

His outstanding performance drew the attention of the McLaren team. Looking to capitalize on the massive potential of the China mar-



Cheng Congfu in his new suit

Photos by Sina.com

ket, the team signed Cheng as their domestic image builder and on May 11 asked him to take a trial drive at a track in Saxton four days later.

When the big day came, Cheng performed even better than expected to the excitement of McLaren technicians. Yet he did not hear more from the team until June 19, when the young speedster was told that McLaren was willing to sign a contract with him and include him in a driver training program.

Then, on July 29, Cheng participated in a Europe Formula Renault race as a member of the McLaren Manor team. Driving car no. 23 in his debut race at the Donington Park circuit, Cheng ended careening off the track and had problems with his car that forced him to exit the race.

However, Martin Whitmarsh, chairman of the board of directors of McLaren International, was quoted on the Chinese version of McLaren's website as saying, "It's quite difficult to master completely new racing rules and we were happy to see the progress that Cheng showed".

In the same web article, Kimi Raikkonen, Cheng's F1 hero, said, "David (Coulthard) and I were glad to see Cheng's signing by McLaren and wish him success. I used to drive in Formula Renault and I know Cheng will learn a lot from it."

Nothing would thrill domestic F1 fans more than to someday see Cheng race at the Shanghai International Circuit. Nearly 7,000 workers are busy constructing the \$200 million track, set to be completed next March.

Best and Brightest Named for Annual UEFA Awards

By Hou Mingxin

Last Wednesday, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) announced the nominees for its annual awards.

Eighteen players from European clubs were nominated, including nine players from Italian Serie A and six players from Spanish league champions Real Madrid, but only two from the English Premiership and none from the German or French leagues.

The winners of this year's awards will be named on August 28 in Monaco. The nominees are:

Best goalkeeper:

Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus); Iker Casillas (Real Madrid); Francesco Toldo (Inter Milan).

Best defender:

Cristian Chivu (Ajax); Paolo

Maldini (AC Milan); Alessandro Nesta (AC Milan); Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Lilian Thuram (Juventus).

Best midfielder:

Edgar Davids (Juventus); Claude Makelele (Real Madrid); Pavel Nedved (Juventus); Paul Scholes (Manchester United); Zinedine Zidane (Real Madrid).

Best forward:

Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid); Ronaldo (Real Madrid); Andriy Shevchenko (AC Milan); Ruud van Nistelrooy (Manchester United); Christian Vieri (Inter Milan).

Most valuable player:

Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus); Pavel Nedved (Juventus); Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Ruud van Nistelrooy (Manchester United); Zinedine Zidane (Real Madrid).

China to Send 336-Strong Team to Universiad

By Hou Mingxin

China will send a 336-member delegation to the World University Games, to be held later this month in the South Korean city of Daegu, a Chinese delegation official announced last Tuesday in Beijing.

Deputy chief of the mission Pan Zhichen said that the delegation would include 229 athletes from 45 universities and colleges nationwide, who would compete in all 13 events in the Universiad except water polo.

Big names among the field

include three-time winner at the recent world swimming championships Luo Xuejuan and women's 200m breaststroke world record holder Qi Hui. Guo Jingjing, who won two diving golds at the Barcelona swimming championships, is also on the roster.

Most members of the delegation, headed by deputy director of the State General Administration of Sports Duan Shijie, will leave on August 18 for the Daegu Games, which will run from August 21 to 31.

By Joel Kirkhart

It's not without good reason that ragingly hot food is popular in the brutal heat of tropical climes and spicy specialties such as *mala longxia* (spicy crawfish) or *shuizhuyu* (boiled fish in hot oil) are dining fixtures in the summer in Beijing. These foods are made hot, of course, through the use of chili peppers, also known as capsicums, that not only can set fire to the mouth, but actually have a cooling effect on the body.

These little wonders of nature, which actually are not vegetables but members of the berry family, are also great for health. The compounds in chilies that make them hot can kill some harmful bacteria in food and even help people lose weight by boosting metabolic rates. Moreover, peppers of nearly all forms contain more vitamin C, gram for gram, than citrus fruit and more vitamin A than carrots.

The ingredient that makes chilies hot is called capsaicin, a compound found only in peppers. Capsaicin offers pain and pleasure, as its presence in the mouth causes the body to release endorphins, natural pain killers. Most of the capsaicin in peppers is contained in their seeds and internal membranes, so a good way to moderate a chili's heat is to remove those potent parts and only use the colored pod.

In Chinese cooking, chili peppers are known as *lajiao* and are most closely associated with the pungent cuisines of Sichuan and Hunan provinces. There are plenty of well-known sayings on the matter, such as "Sichuanese do not fear spice, Hunanese fear what is not spicy", but what many people do not know is that the taste for heat is relatively new in all parts of this country.

In fact, chilies are native to Central and South America, and did not make it to China's shores until the 17th century. Since then, hot peppers have been widely cultivated and become very popular. Many chilies grown in this country and dried, but there is an increasingly diverse range of fresh peppers available in local markets.

There are few rules of thumb to follow when buying chili peppers and cooking with them. First, the smaller and thinner a pepper is, the hotter it should be. Purchase firm peppers that do not have dark or soft spots and keep them in the refrigerator. Perhaps most important, after handling any kind of hot chili, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly, as peppers' natural capsaicin-laden oil can linger on fingers and cause painful irritation if rubbed in the eyes or on skin.

Below is a list of some of the hot peppers and chili-based products that can be found around town, listed in rough order of heat, from hottest to mildest.

Thai bird chilies – these little peppers, in green and red versions, pack a real wallop for their size, and are prob-

Chili peppers are among nature's most wonderful creations, small low-calorie and high-nutrition packets of addictive fire and flavor.



Left to right: dried pepper snacks, Tabasco sauce, *duojiao*, chipotle chilies in *adobo*, *pepperoncini*.

Some Like it Hot



Photos by Wang Yong

ably the hottest chilies per gram readily available fresh in this city. A little goes a long way in cooked dishes, as a piquant condiment or in combination with other flavors. For example, they add nice fire and flavor to *nuoc cham*, a spicy, salty Vietnamese sauce that goes great with grilled pork, sates, or

simply as a side condiment for vegetables.

Vietnamese Dipping Sauce (Nuoc Cham)

Ingredients:
1 4-cm chunk of thick carrot, peeled, cut into paper-thin strips (try a vegetable peeler for this) and sliced into hair-like slivers

3 tablespoons sugar
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup warm water
1/4 cup Thai fish sauce
1/4 cup lime juice, or more to taste

1 or 2 Thai bird chilies, cut into thin rounds
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Procedure: Put the sugar and garlic in a bowl and mash into a paste with a wooden spoon or pestle. Add the water, fish sauce and lime juice and stir until sugar is dissolved. Add chili slices and black pepper. Taste for seasoning – a good sauce should strike a balance between salty, sweet, sour and spicy.

Chipotle chilies – the Heping Market in the Sanlitun area is likely the only place in town to find cans of these chilies, but it is worth the hunt. This canned heat, Mexican-style, is made from smoked jalapeno peppers packed in a rich, pungent dark red sauce called *adobo* and has a delicious, spicy, chocolate-like flavor.

Just one of these chilies and some of the surrounding sauce is enough to flavor and add considerable heat to sauces and can transform the flavor of run-of-the-mill salsa, as in the recipe below.

Chipotle Salsa

Ingredients:
3 cups chopped tomatoes
3/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped canned chipotle chilies in adobo sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
Procedure: Combine all ingre-

dients in medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

Chaotianjiao peppers are seasonal products that hit the market right around now in late summer. These long,

thin green or red chilies pack a serious punch, far hotter than the normal *jianjiao*, or New Mexico chilies, that are the most common in local stores. Julienned or diced, they can be added to stir-fried or steamed dishes, but be careful – a little goes a long way. These would probably be called Anaheim chilies in the US.

Dried red chilis – these come in several varieties, whole, crushed into coarse flakes or ground into powder. The

thinner ones are normally used just as a heat additive and are available in a range of spice levels. Another version, sometimes called *chuanjiao*, are round and squat. They have a good heat kick and are far more flavorful than their thinner brethren. These are the chilies behind the delicious spice of favorite Hunan and Sichuan dishes such as *shuizhuyu* and *laziji*, a chicken dish made with a literal pile of dried chilies. Use dried chilies by adding them early on to stir-fried, boiled or steamed dishes, or first rehydrate them in a little water to give them more body and then add. This is best done with the larger *chuanjiao*.

Pickled peppers (*duojiao*) – Chinese pickled chilies are normally made from fresh *chuanjiao* or similar red

hot peppers pickled in a salty, vinegary brine, either whole or diced. They are the star ingredient in the famed Hunan-style dish *duojiao yutou*, pickled chilies with fish head, which is surprisingly easy to make at home.

Simply get a fresh fish head, put it onto a plate with curved edges and top it with around a teaspoon of cooking or sesame oil, a splash of soy sauce or worstershire sauce, some strips of thinly sliced ginger and two tablespoons (or more to taste) of chopped *duojiao* from a jar. Then steam until the fish meat is opaque and flakes easily, signs that it is done. This rough recipe should be adjusted to suit personal preferences, but be sure not to add salt – most store-bought *duojiao* is already salty enough.

The West also produces pickled peppers, most often referred to by their Italian name of *pepperoncini*. Normally made from small yellow chilies, these salty, spicy and tart peppers are a fixture in Italian antipasti and make a great side for sandwiches.

Hot sauce – Chili sauces are produced nearly everywhere in the world that spicy food is popular. Chinese hot sauces tend to be somewhat sweet and not too spicy, as many are mixed with catsup. Mexican and American-style sauces mostly forgo sugar for salt and are hotter. The easiest to find and most famous such hot sauce is the legendary Tabasco, made on a small island in the US state of Louisiana from a secret breed of tabasco peppers. Thai hot sauce, called *sriracha*, features a balance of sweet and salty with plenty of heat with a thicker body than Tabasco. Any of these sauces can



simply be sprinkled over finished dishes or included while cooking to add heat and flavor.

Jianjiao – These large chilies, available in green or red, are relatively mild and are the most common fresh peppers used in Chinese cooking. In North America, at least, these are known as poblano peppers.

A great way to get more flavor from *jianjiao* is to roast them. Do this first by washing them and patting them dry, then making a small cut in the peppers to ensure they do not explode while cooking. Then roast them over high heat, in an oven, directly over the flame of a stove, or on a grill, turning judiciously, until the skin has darkened and blistered evenly, but is not charred. Then put them into a plastic bag and close, or in a bowl covered with a wet towel, so they can steam, a step that makes it much easier to remove the roasted skin. After 10 to 15 minutes of steaming, take them out and let them cool, after which it should be easy to remove the skins, seeds and membranes.

Roasted Chili and Corn Chowder

This delicious soup packs a solid spice punch thanks to the roasted peppers, made a little milder through the addition of milk and nicely matched by the sweet crunch of corn.

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
2 cups milk
3/4 kilo new potatoes, unpeeled and diced

3 medium poblano peppers, roasted, peeled and seeded (see procedure above)

1 package frozen corn, 1 can of sweet corn

Salt, pepper, cayenne pepper to taste

Procedure: In a large pot, melt the butter over medium-high heat, being sure not to let it brown. Add the garlic, celery and onion and cook until onion is soft and translucent, around five minutes. Reduce heat to low and add flour to make roux (flour cooked in butter that makes a tasty thickener for soups and sauces). Cook over low heat, stirring almost constantly, for another five minutes until mixture has darkened slightly, making sure not to let flour burn. Add the stock and turn up the heat, stirring or whisking to prevent roux from lumping.

Add the milk, bring soup to rolling boil and then reduce heat to simmer for five minutes, stirring often. Add potatoes, chilies and corn and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes. Add salt and peppers to taste and serve. Serves six to eight.

Italian Art, Food and Lifestyle at Rita

By James Liu

Rita, a new entrant into Beijing's competitive Italian restaurant ranks, is an interesting contender with several strong points. This comfortable eatery offers reasonably-priced authentic Italian fare with a



Artificial Landscape at Rita

tangible feel of that country's art and culture in an almost unrivaled location downtown.

Owner Oscar Marchisio believes that art and culture are integral parts of any true Italian dining experience. In addition to setting up a small bookstore and gift shop in one corner, he commissioned renowned Chinese artist Huan Du to oversee live performances in the restaurant to add to its environment and appeal.

The menu offers a range of delicious and authentic thin crust pizzas available with many favorite toppings, as well as fresh pastas in individual servings or in large family-style bowls called *zupperia* large enough to satisfy several diners. Also check out the extensive and wholesome salad bar.

Coffee has an important place in Italian culture, represented at Rita by a special



"Coffee Corner". The restaurant's barristas brew up excellent espresso, cappuccino and lattes, as well as authentic *moka* coffee.

Last Thursday, Rita upped the cultural ante by hosting artist Zhan Wang's *Artificial Landscape*, a work made from rock-shaped pieces and eating utensils all forged, from stainless steel. The metallic "rocks" are placed below a mirror wall that reflects the work and seems to expand the already sizeable restaurant.

Add: 3 Dongdan Beidajie, Dongcheng **Open:** 10 am – 10 pm **Tel:** 6512 3629 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person



Jams

Return of da Riddim' Selectah

'King Selectah' Steve Barker keeps it moving with reggae, dub, dancehall and funk, with the support of DJ Mother-man.

Where: Treelounge, Dongsanhuan Lu, 100 meters south of Agricultural Exhibition Centre **When:** August 15, 9 pm **Admission:** free

Death Metal Music

Tookoo, Hanging on the Box (Guazai Hezishang), Junxiesuo and Sink (Taxian) will perform on Friday evening. On Saturday afternoon at 2 pm, Doll No. 7 (Yangwawa Qihao), Chen Lei and Eight Hands Band (Bazhishou Yuedui) and others, then stick around for Second Hand Roses at 9:30. On Sunday punk show features 2MC, Kungfu, Ling, and S-Bearing.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics **When:** 9:30 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109

Stage

Liba Qiang de Yingzi (Shadows of the Fence Walls)

Performed by China National Opera and Dance Theatre. Based on two popular TV play series, Fence, Woman and Dog, and Well-pulley, Woman and Well, the dance depicts the two marriages of one village woman, who finds herself growing from a common village girl to an independent, modern woman. The music is by pop song composer Xu Peidong.

Where: Poly Theatre **When:** August 20-23, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120-880 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5176

Taohua Yao (Peach Blossom Ballad)

Performed by the Central Drama Theatre, the play tells the story of Taohua and Zhao Husheng, who meet and fall in love during the Sino-Japanese war.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theatre **When:** August 15-16, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-280 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

Sports

Ultimate Frisbee

The Frisbee league is now playing on a regular basis in Beijing and welcomes beginner and experienced players.

Where: Chaoyang Sports Center **When:** Sundays 2 pm **Admission:** 30-20 yuan **Tel:** 13601362690

Party

Tsunami Party

Tribe Productions present Beijing's own beach party - get ready for Tsunami 2003. DJs Bobby from Lotus, Usami and Slab from Elektrobeat will provide the music. Bring your beachwear and party gear and be ready to groove.

When: August 23, 10 pm **Where:** City Seaview Waterpark, Jichang Fulu, 6 kilometers north of Dashanzi Huandao **Admission:** 100 yuan, including one free drink **Tel:** 8431 0885



Movies



The Medallion

Directed by Gordon Chan, starring Jackie Chan, Lee Evans, Claire Forlani and Christy Chung. An action comedy in which Chan stars as a resolute Hong Kong cop who suffers a near fatal accident while investigating a case involving a mysterious medallion. Selected screenings in English

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** from August 15 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

Fear Eats the Soul

Directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, starring Brigitte Mira, El Hedi, Ben Salem. A 60 year-old German cleaning woman and a 40 year-old Moroccan immigrant fall in love and marry, much to the chagrin of practically everyone else. Winner of the International Critics Prize at Cannes in 1974. German with English subtitles.

Where: Space for Imagination, 5 Xiwangzhuang Haidian **When:** August 16, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

Seduced and Abandoned

Directed by Pietro Germi, starring Stefania Sandrelli, Saro Urzi, Lando Buzzanca and Umberto Spadaro. In this comedy, Aldo Puglisi is the Romeo who commits *l'errore grande* when he gets his fiancée's youngest sister pregnant. Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Cultural Office of Italian Embassy **When:** August 21, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Services

Playing Pingpong

Table tennis tables are set up Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday evenings at the Opera Photo Studio.

Where: Opera Photo Studio (beside the Carpet House) **When:** 6-11 pm **Tel:** 6436 9709

Outdoor Tennis

The Wei'er Tennis club offers outdoor elementary and advanced tennis classes every week. Elementary class consists of eight lessons totalling 16 hours for 800 yuan. Advanced class costs 1,000 yuan for 16 hours. All coaches are professional and trainees enjoy a 20 percent discount.

Where: Wei'er Tennis Shop, 21st Century Hotel, 500 meters east of the Lufthansa Center **Tel:** 64663311 ext. 3176

Music



Beyond Hong Kong

Founded in 1983, Beyond has won numerous awards and overcome the tragic death of lead singer Huang Jiaju. The remaining three continued until disbanding in 1999. Now, Beyond are back together for a special tour.

Where: Beijing Worker's Stadium **When:** August 23, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120-880 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

Children's Concert

Beijing Solar Youth Symphony Orchestra performs selections from Swan Lake and more. Under the baton of Jiang Xiongda.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** August 17, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 10-60 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Exhibitions



Yang Ermin Art Exhibition

Yang Ermin has been living in Japan for many years and has exhibited in numerous international art exhibitions. His sharp observation and outstanding expressive skill creates a new contemporary look in his paintings.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu **When:** August 16-24, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

Travel

Special Package to Hong Kong

Hong Kong-based airline, Dragonair, offers a three-day, two-night Hong Kong special package costing only 2,800 yuan comprises a round trip economy class ticket, two nights' accommodation at either the Holiday Inn Golden Mile or the Excelsior, and travel insurance. A HK \$300 food and beverage credit is also included. **Tel:** 6518 2533

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By Guo Yuanan

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Autumn is the golden season in the valleys nearby. Horse riding is the most popular entertainment.

Photo by Photocom

Bai Shi Shan

(White Stone Mountain)

By Zhao Hongyi

Masses of pure white marble stones leave no doubt as to how Bai Shi Shan (White Stone Mountain) came by its name.

Around 200 kilometers south of Beijing, on the outskirts of Laiyuan County, Bai Shi Shan is the northernmost point of the 800-kilometer Taihang Mountain range. The mountain is the site of a famous battle between Communist Party led forces and Japanese invaders in the 1940s, which is still talked about by older locals in the city of Laiyuan and along the river of the same name that leads deep into the mountains.

The 2,096-meter-high Bai

Shi Shan and its neighbors are covered with heavy forests of birch, maple, pine and linden trees, a result of an unusually rainy climate for northern China.

The newly opened scenic area features spectacular peaks and cliffs, and is home to a number of endangered species including leopard, wild goat and various birds. The entire area is listed as a national geology park due to its rich resources of natural landscape, plants and animals.

Tunnels have been dug at the foot of the mountain and plank walkways constructed along the cliffs to allow tourists access to the summit while minimizing disruption to the natural environment.

Laiyuan, which means "source of the Lai River," collects hundreds of springs and streams from the mountains, most of which fall from the cliffs, forming waterfalls, big and small.

In the valleys between the mountains are areas of grassland where visitors can ride horses, pick wild flowers, and generally commune with nature.

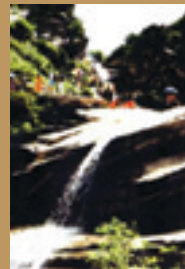
In the evenings, dishes prepared by local farmers in their own kitchens are another attraction for tourists along the Lai River. Local trout, broomcorn millet cake, homemade tofu, thin pancakes, naked oats noodle and a variety of wild herbs are delicacies visitors cannot miss.

Getting there: Take the

Beijing-Shijiazhuang Expressway and turn onto highway G112 at Gaobiedian, Hebei Province. Pass through Laishui, Yixian, Qingxiling and Zhijinguan, to Laiyuan.

Alternatively, take tourist train L673 at 7:39 am from Beijing South Railway Station and L674 back at 1:45pm the following day, arriving at Beijing at 5:49pm.

Other trains:
Train 795 (Beijing-Laiyuan, 6:38-12:00);
Train 796 (Laiyuan-Beijing, 16:35-22:00)
Train 897 (Beijing-Laiyuan, 17:40-23:23);
Train 896 (Laiyuan-Beijing, 5:55-11:30)
One way ticket price is 26 yuan.



Beijing's Norwegian Wood



Fresh air and blue skies provide a welcome antidote to the daily urban grind.

By Zhao Hongyi

Not to be confused with the Beetles' Norwegian Wood, nor that of Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami, Beijing's Norwegian Wood — the Shunxin Green Holiday Resort is a charming holiday spot, just 80 kilometers away from downtown.

Lying in the southwest of Shunyi District, the 266-hectare forest resort boasts peace and quiet, fresh air and fun. While Nordic beauties may be somewhat scarce, the environment of water and forest creates a pleasant atmosphere, conducive to contemplation and communing with nature.

The resort is in the center of the forest, and features several dozen log cabins and an artificial lake filled with water from the nearby Chaobai River, at one time an important water source for the city and the northernmost point of the Grand Canal, linking Beijing to Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces in the south.

Life in the resort is simple. Guests can go mushroom picking, read books, sunbath, whatever



Photos by Zhao Hongyi

takes ones fancy, accompanied by goats, who are only really interested in eating grass. Cicadas provide a somewhat hypnotic soundtrack.

Tandem bicycles are available for couples to explore the forest paths, while the lake and man-made beach provide a place for fishing and boating.

For the athletically inclined, there is archery, table tennis, beach soccer, volleyball, baseball, rock climbing and roller-skating available, while the more sedentary can occupy themselves with

billiards or mahjong.

The restaurant offers home cooking from the farmers' kitchen (50 yuan per head), with dishes including fried tofu, soy sauce river fish and a wide variety of vegetables.

For those wanting more than a day trip, Scandinavian style log cabins cost 300 yuan per person per night, while Japanese tatami rooms are also available for 150 yuan per person per night.

Last, but not least, visitors have the opportunity to join in the harvest fun by picking fruit in the neighboring gardens. Fruit is plentiful, from strawberries and peaches in the early summer, apples and pears in mid-summer, to grapes and hawthorns in the early autumn.

Getting there: Take Bus 915 or 923 (10 yuan) from Dongzhimen bus station to Shunyi, then take a taxi (20 yuan) or free shuttle bus (every thirty minutes) to the resort. Alternatively, drive north along the Beijing-Airport/Shunyi Expressway and turn southwest along Chaobai River

Admission: 15 yuan/head
Booking: 8948 2968



Horse head ornament in the British Noble section

Chinese Museum of Horse Culture

By Zhao Hongyi

The world's first horses appeared one million years ago in North America. These ancient broncos were much smaller than their contemporary descendants. They spread via the Bering Strait to Siberia and then to every corner of the globe. The original species later became extinct in North America, and it was not until the 16th century that Spanish colonizers re-introduced horses to the continent.

The Chinese Museum of Horse Culture provides visitors with an in depth introduction to the history of the horse. The museum, newly established this year at the foot of the Badaling Great Wall, is the first such museum in China, according to deputy manager Huang Ya.

It displays a collection of artifacts and written records related to the history and culture of the horse, divided into six sections; written records, paintings, photographs, American Cowboys, British Nobles, and the Mongolian Horsemen.

The written records section introduces the history of horses in China, from the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC-476 BC), from use by the military to tools for agriculture and transportation, to the rise in the popularity of horseracing.

The paintings section features horse paintings and sculptures, while the photograph section features records of exciting moments in a variety of equestrian contests, from the Omak Stampede, to the game of *buzkashi*, popular in Mongolia and Central Asia.

In the American Cowboys section, the role of the horse in the American west is explored, while the British Noble section introduces the Grand National, one of the world's best known horse races.

The Mongolian Horseman section pays tribute to Genghis Khan and his mounted warriors, and includes a Ma Tou Qin (a traditional Mongolian stringed music instrument with a scroll carved like a horse's head).

The museum also provides practice facilities to the China National Equestrian Team, with the aim, according to museum general manager Xu Keping, of enabling the Chinese team to elbow its way into the first eight in the 2008 Olympic Games.

Where: Rose Valley Villa Community, Badaling

Getting there: Take the Beijing-Badaling Expressway to Badaling (70 kilometers)

Admission: Free
Tel: 8118 2300 ext. 2307



'Niren Zhang' pottery craft from Tianjin focus on the relationship between horse and human.

Photos by Ayi